

P A I N E 'S

A G E OF R E A S O N,

WITH REMARKS,

Containing a Vindication of the DOCTRINES of
CHRISTIANITY from the Aspersions
of that A U T H O R.

BY A *CITIZEN* OF THE *WORLD*.

*Behold, ye are of NOTHING, and your work of NOUGHT;
an ABOMINATION is he that chooseth you!*
Iſa: xli.

B E L F A S T:

Printed in the Year 1794.



P A I N E 'S

A G E O F R E A S O N, &c.

PASSING by the three first Paragraphs of Mr *Paine's* work as uninteresting, I begin with the fourth, which contains his Creed or Confession of Faith; and, that no suspicion of any misrepresentation may be entertained, I shall transcribe not only this, but every other Paragraph on which I animadvert; giving my remarks upon each as I go along. For the conveniency of referring to any part of his work, I have numbered the Paragraphs, though they are not so in the original performance.

MR PAINE.

Par: 4. "I believe in one God and no more, and I hope for happiness beyond this life."

REMARK.

If Mr *Paine* believes in a God, he ought to have told us some of the properties or attributes belonging to that being. Infinite power is no doubt one of those properties; but *Power*, by itself, cannot demonstrate the being who possesses it to be a good one. The ancient Manicheans believed in *two* Gods, equally powerful; but the one was good, and the other evil. Mr. *Paine* ought to have told us which of these he chose for his God; for as he takes no notice either here, or any where else, that such a thing as evil exists, we are at liberty to suppose that his God produces it as naturally as good; consequently that he is rather of the malevolent kind, and that the name of *Devil* might be applied with as much propriety to him as that of God.

Mr. *Paine* hopes for happiness beyond this life; but he does not inform us why he does so; and in this he is more inconsistent than any sect, either of Christians or any other religion, that ever appeared. Every one of these gave *some* reason why they hoped for future happiness; but Mr. *Paine* gives *none*. This first part of the Creed therefore is exceedingly imperfect, and ought to be amended.

MR. PAINE.

5. I believe the Equality of Man; and that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavouring to make our fellow creatures happy.

RE.

REMARK.

THAT Mr. *Paine* is *obliged* to believe the equality of man, while he remains in France, we all know very well; but however he may profess to do so, I am not of opinion that it is a position to which people can very readily yield their hearty concurrence. I remember to have seen an answer to Mr. *Paine's* Rights of Man, which contained the following sentiment; "It is easy to level *down* to ourselves; but not so easy to level *up* to ourselves." The meaning of the author seems to be, that it is easy to believe ourselves as good as a lord or a bishop, but more difficult to believe that a beggar is as good as we; and I am persuaded that he is in the right; and that Mr. *Paine* ought rather to have prescribed this to himself as a *duty*, than to have said it was an article of his Creed. Indeed it appears to me, that believing the equality of man is the same with loving our Neighbour as ourselves; a duty of immense magnitude, and which not one of us ever has complied with, or ever will comply with in its full extent.

The last part of Mr *Paine's* Creed is so evidently taken from the Bible, that I should have supposed our author to be a believer of it, had not the bible said, that it is the duty of man to do justice, to love mercy, and to *walk humbly with his God*; but tho' Mr. *Paine* has a God, he does not think it any duty to *walk humbly* with him, or, it seems, to take any notice of him. Instead of this he tells us that his duty is to do justice, to love mercy, and to *love mercy*; for to endeavour to make our fellow creatures happy, I presume, is the same with loving mercy. Thus, to avoid a plain quotation from Scripture, which seems to have been forcing itself upon him, he has been obliged to make a tautology, and attempt to impose upon us a divine precept as one of his own invention.

MR. PAINE.

6. "But lest it should be supposed that I believe many other things in addition to these, I shall, in the progress of this work, declare the things I do not believe, and my reasons for not believing them."

REMARK.

HERE we have a piece of self-sufficiency conjoined with non-sense. Mr. *Paine* is afraid, it seems, that the world puzzle themselves about what his opinions really are; and, to prevent them from doing so, he undertakes the most tremendous task ever undertaken by man, viz: to "declare the things he does not believe;" i. e. to make a catalogue of all the falsehoods he can imagine; of which, I suppose, all the books he ever wrote, or will write, would not contain the thousandth part: nay, to add to the difficulty of the task, he promises to give his reasons for not believing them!

It

It may well be supposed, that such magnificent promises, however readily made, will be very indifferently performed. Our Author, however, begins very briskly.

MR. PAINE.

7. "I do not believe in the Creed professed by the Jewish Church, by the Roman Church, by the Greek Church, by the Turkish Church, by the Protestant Church, nor by any Church that I know of. My own mind is my own Church."

REMARK.

If any meaning is to be extracted from this sentence, it seems to be, that Mr. Paine believes no body's opinions but his own; a piece of intelligence with which the world must surely be very much edified.

MR. PAINE.

8. "ALL national institutions of Churches, whether Jewish, Christian or Turkish, appear to me to no other than human inventions set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit."

REMARK.

OUR author seems to be already weary of telling us what he does *not* believe, and therefore gives an additional article of his Creed; but as he gives no reason for believing this, we may conclude it to be a matter of no moment, as he himself indeed allows in the next paragraph.

MR. PAINE.

9. "I do not mean by this declaration to condemn those who believe otherwise. They have the same right to their belief as I have to mine. But it is necessary to the happiness of man, that he be mentally faithful to himself. Infidelity does not consist in believing, or in disbelieving: it consists in professing to believe what he does not believe."

REMARK.

If Mr. Paine does not condemn those who differ from him in this point, to what purpose does he write against them? He cannot be ignorant that the very *existence* of national Churches depends on the belief of some people in them; and, if these are as right in their belief of the truth and uprightness of such institutions as Mr. Paine is in the contrary opinion, how comes he to calumniate and asperse them as being set up with a view to terrify and enslave men, &c. Surely this is a gross contradiction; and is one of the many instances which this book affords, that the Author was utterly incapable of writing on the subject he has taken in hand. When he talks of a *right* to believe, he talks nonsense. Believing is

not a matter of right or of wrong. It depends entirely upon the evidence we have at the time; and a man can no more believe or disbelieve as he pleases, than he can stop and renew the circulation of his blood as he pleases. He may indeed pretend to believe what he does not believe, or to disbelieve what he really believes to be true; but this is *hypocrisy*, not *infidelity* as Mr. Paine would have it, and ought to be condemned as a crime. He may also hate a truth so much that he will refuse to hear the evidence, and then his disbelief becomes a crime, and ought to be condemned. If, after fully hearing the evidence on both sides, he is not convinced, his disbelief of any thing whatever can be no crime; but, as to any right to believe a falsehood, no man ever had or can have it. I do not well see what reason Mr. Paine has for expressing, by an obscure circumlocution, the word *hypocrite* or *hypocrisy*. It is necessary to the happiness of man that he be *mentally faithful* to himself; that is, I suppose, that he be no hypocrite: and in the following paragraph, we find hypocrisy denominated *mental lying*. His definition of *infidelity*, making it the same with *hypocrisy*, is undoubtedly false; and it is a falsehood, as far as I know, peculiar to himself. Whether it be a *mental lie* or not, Mr. Paine is the best judge:

MR. PAINE.

10. "IT is impossible to calculate the moral mischief, if I may so express it, that mental lying has produced in society: When a man has so far corrupted and prostituted the chastity of his mind, as to subscribe his professional belief to things he does not believe, he has prepared himself for the commission of every other crime. He takes up the trade of a priest for the sake of gain, and, in order to *qualify* himself for that trade, he begins with a perjury. Can we conceive any thing more destructive to morality than this?"

REMARK.

THERE is no doubt that hypocrisy is a most abominable vice; the foundation of many others, destructive to society, and subversive of all morality. This was known long before Mr. Paine's pamphlet appeared, and he has made it no more evident than it was before.

MR. PAINE.

11. "SOON after I had published the pamphlet, COMMON SENSE, in America, I saw the exceeding probability, that a revolution in the system of government would be followed by a revolution in the system of religion. The adulterous connection of church and state, wherever it had taken place, whether Jewish, Christian, or Turkish, had so effectually prohibited, by pains and penalties, every discussion upon established creeds, and upon first principles of religion, that, until the system of government should be changed, those subjects could not be fairly and openly brought before the world: but that, whenever this should be done, a revolution in the system

system of religion would follow. Human inventions, and priestcraft would be detected; and man would return to the pure unmixed and unadulterated belief of one God, and no more."

REMARK.

HERE Mr. *Paine* pays a compliment to his own sagacity, which, however, seems not to be well founded. The revolution of government in America has not been followed by any revolution in religion; neither is it true that discussions on religious subjects were prevented by the severity of the national establishments. On the contrary, every religious point had been discussed over and over, long before the revolution in America. The christian religion had been attacked, and the secrets of priestcraft repeatedly exposed; and it is most evident, that whatever religious discussions have taken place in France, they must have been *before* the present revolution; for since that time there has been no leisure for any. As for what is termed their national religion, it is by no means established, like their political government, by the consent or demand of a great majority of the nation; but seems rather to be calculated for a temporary purpose, till some better scheme be fallen upon. The accomplishment of Mr. *Paine's* prediction therefore is still to come.

MR. PAINE.

12. "EVERY national church or religion has established itself by pretending some special mission from God, communicated to certain individuals. The Jews have their Moses; the christians their Jesus Christ, their apostles and saints; and the Turks their Mahomet; as if the way to God was not open to every man alike."

REMARK.

HERE our Author attacks revelation, but without success. He takes it for granted, that the way to God is open to every man alike; but this he ought to have proved, and not taken it for granted, with a sneer at those who think otherwise. How does he know that there is *any way* from man to God? How did he find it out, or who made the deity and he so well acquainted? Certain it is, that the deity is invisible; and, however much Mr. *Paine* may dislike some parts of the bible, he will, I suppose assent to this, that "we have neither heard God's voice at any time, nor seen his shape." This is but poor encouragement to those who wish to find out God by themselves; nor do I see how it is possible, unless God has discovered himself to mankind, that they could have discovered any thing whatever concerning him; not even the general proposition, that there is a being distinct from, and superior to this visible system of nature. The Jews, the Christians, the Turks, and even the Heathens, are infinitely more consistent than Mr. *Paine*. All of them owned their inability to make themselves

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acquainted with God, and therefore believed that God had communicated a knowledge of himself to some individual of the human race, who thus might become capable of instructing others; while Mr. *Paine*, having no faculties of his own sufficient for the task, and disdaining to receive instructions from another, must remain in everlasting ignorance.

MR. PAINE.

13. "EACH of these churches shows certain books which they call *Revelation*, or the word of God. The Jews say that their word of God was given by God to Moses, face to face; the Christians say, that their word of God was given by divine inspiration; and the Turks say, that their word of God (the koran) was brought by an angel from heaven. Each of these churches accuses the other of unbelief, and for my part, I disbelieve them all."

REMARK.

It may be true, that Mr. *Paine* disbelieves the doctrines of all these churches, but this is not a proof that any one of them is false. Besides, the *Revelations*, as he calls them, of the three, are, properly speaking the same. The Christians own the divinity of the Old Testament, and add to that the New Testament as the proper explanation of the Old. The koran owns the divinity of the Old and part of the New Testament, and is so compounded of the two, that very little discernment is necessary to distinguish the fabulous and absurd parts, written by Mahomet himself, from what he compiled out of the Old and New Testament. Nay, we shall in a short time find Mr. *Paine* asserting that the heathen mythology had prepared mankind for the doctrines of christianity. At this rate mankind have only *one* revelation, and though they should have corrupted it ever so often, this will never prove either the falshood of the original revelation, or that there have been more revelations than one. I know not upon what foundation Mr. *Paine* rests his belief of a Deity. The universal consent of mankind is very commonly urged as an argument; but if it be an argument for the belief of a Deity, it is equally strong in favour of revelation. There never was a nation upon earth, let their notions be as absurd as we will, but what pretended that they were instructed by their Gods, or by men to whom the Gods revealed themselves. It never came in their heads that they were able to penetrate into the councils of their Gods by themselves. This was reserved for Mr. *Paine*, and such philosophers as adorn the present age. I remember not a single instance of its being said that man could intrude himself upon the Deity, except in the story of Phæton, who undertook a journey into the regions of the East, to pay a visit to his father Phœbus. Even here, it was not pretended that there could be any communication between them, till the God laid aside his divine majesty, by taking off the rays which surrounded his head, the lustre of which

which would have been insupportable by a weak mortal. The heathens had gods of many different kinds, celestial, terrestrial, and infernal; but all of them agreed in this property of being invisible and inaccessible to mortals, unless they themselves pleased. Even the drunken god Silenus, and the fury Tisiphone were possessed of this property; for, when the two youths found Silenus asleep and bound him, he told them to unloose him, it being sufficient for them to *have seen* him; and when the furies arose either to inspire individuals, or whole nations with their hellish rage, they were absolutely invisible; and nobody could have known that they were present, but by the effects they produced. It is plain therefore, that among all nations it has been an undisputed maxim, that God is invisible, and inaccessible to man, and that whatever can be known about him must be discovered by himself.

MR. PAINE.

14. "As it is necessary to affix right ideas to words, I will, before I proceed farther into the subject, offer some observations on the word *Revelation*. Revelation, when applied to religion means something communicated *immediately* from God to man."

REMARK.

THERE is certainly nothing of greater importance in any speculation, especially in theology, than to understand clearly the meaning of the words we use; and in the present case, if we give an accurate definition of the word *Revelation*, it will almost end the dispute. But Mr. Paine's definition is imperfect. A revelation from God is not only something communicated from God to man, but it is something which, without that communication, the faculties of man could not have discovered. Now we, who are possessed of all the human faculties, ought undoubtedly to know the full extent of them, and to be able instantaneously to distinguish any piece of knowledge, which may be the result of the exercise of those faculties, from one which cannot possibly be so. This leads us to

A SURVEY OF THE FACULTIES OF THE HUMAN MIND.

THESE are only four in number; viz Sense, Memory, Imagination, and Reason. Sense, branched out into five divisions, Sight, Hearing, Touch, Taste and Smell, is the the only primary and independent faculty we have; for this depends on nothing but the system of nature around us, while all the rest of our faculties are derived from sense, as we shall presently see. By sense we are informed of what is present.

OUR memory is most evidently dependent on our sense; for we can *remember* nothing that we have not seen or heard, otherwise

our memory would be false. This faculty informs us of what is past.

IMAGINATION is the faculty which may seem in some measure independent of our senses; but, if the matter is fairly considered, we shall find that our imagination is only a power, we have of combining the objects of memory in a way different from what they are naturally. Thus, having seen a man, and seen a horse, we cannot remember a man with a horse's head, but we can *imagine* one. If we have never seen an elephant, or heard any description of one, we cannot *imagine* a man with an elephant's head; because memory does not furnish us with one of the objects necessary for completing that imagination. If therefore sense and memory do not furnish *every* material for an imagination, that imagination never can be completed; and if they furnish *no* material, we can imagine nothing at all. Imagination, by combining the objects of sense and memory in a manner different from what they are in nature, shows us what *might be*; or what is possible, and according to the accuteness and exercise of our senses and memory, our imagination will be more or less extensive.

By the help of our memories we become ascertained of the veracity of our senses, and the immutability of the present system of nature. We see that in similar circumstances the same effect always follows the same cause. Thus if we saw any thing fall from an high place, should we never see the like happen afterwards, we might be under some doubt whether the same effect would always take place. But seeing things constantly fall, when unsupported, we very soon come to look upon it as an established law of nature; that they will do so in all cases. This exercise of the senses is called *Experience*, and is the basis of *Reason*. This celebrated faculty therefore is only a power of comparing the objects of sense and memory together, and from thence regulating our imagination, and determining it in a certain manner; and that with regard not only to the present, but to the past and future. Thus; "A man yesterday stepped over a precipice." Imagination might suggest to us, that he flew up into the air, or was carried away by the wind &c but reason, from *Experience*, determines otherwise. "The man fell to the bottom, and was probably killed, or grievously hurt." In like manner if a man has just now stepped over a precipice, reason will determine that he *is* hurt; or if we know that a man will step over a precipice, reason will determine that he *will* be hurt, &c.

Thus we see that the natural reason of man is entirely dependent on the senses, and cannot go one step beyond or without them.—Nevertheless it is a most exalted and noble faculty; and we may shortly state the different powers and offices of all the faculties of our minds in the following manner. Sense informs us of what *is*; memory of what is *past*; imagination of what *may be*; and reason of *what is*, *what was*, and *what shall be*, in places and times ever
so

so distant from those in which we live. The power of reason, however, is entirely dependent on the exercise of the senses. If these have been but little exercised, the rational faculty is weak; but otherwise, if the person has had much experience; provided no natural defect prevents him from making use of the advantage he has. Let us now suppose a person, whose senses are so acute, that he perceives all things that *are*; his memory so retentive, that he knows perfectly all things that *have been*; the imagination of that person will be a perfect knowledge of all things that *can be*; and his reason a perfect and infallible knowledge of all things past, present and to come; and thus we already see, how, without any violation to reason, we may suppose a *man* to be invested with one of the properties of the *Deity*, viz. *Omniscience*.

From this account of the human faculties it is very evident, that the reason of man cannot discover, nor his imagination invent, any thing but what sense is one way or other the foundation of. Revelation does not intermeddle with any thing which the natural reason of man could have discovered of itself; and hence, if a person tells us that the Deity revealed to him any thing which people might have found out of themselves, we know that he tells a falsehood. Every point of revelation therefore is to us not a discovery of truth similar to what we might have known of ourselves, but it comes as it were in the place of a sixth sense; as a foundation upon which we may build our reasonings; and, if we should reason ever so much, either about the natural senses we have in consequence of the formation of our bodies, and the action of the elements upon them; or our spiritual senses arising from the formation of our minds, and the action of the divine word upon them, we can neither increase or diminish the evidence of the one or the other. By attending to this account of the human faculties, and the extent of them we will easily be able to give an answer to Mr. Paine's next paragraph.

MR. PAINE.

15. "No one will deny or dispute the power of the Almighty to make such a communication if he pleases. But, admitting, for the sake of a case, that something has been revealed to a certain person, and not revealed to any other person, it is revelation to that person only. When he tells it to a third, a third to a fourth, and so on, it ceases to be a revelation to all those persons. It is a revelation to the first person only, and *bears* say to every other, and consequently they are not obliged to believe it."

REMARK.

In this paragraph Mr. Paine takes it for granted that God *could* reveal himself to *one* man; but he forgets to tell us how this fa-

voured individual is to distinguish the word of God from a reverie of the imagination, or an illusion of the senses? Will our author indeed have us to imagine that God is like any being upon earth, so that we can see and hear him speak to us as we can see and hear one another? Will he say that the divine essence is like fire, air, or water, or any thing that can be the object of our senses? If this be not the case, then, suppose any individual were to see a being of the most extraordinary figure and appearance, suddenly start up before him, and as suddenly vanish, after having communicated a certain piece of intelligence to him; how is he to distinguish this from an illusion of a disordered brain? For my part, I cannot see a possibility on the part of the man, and unless Mr. Paine can inform us of something on the part of God, by which his word can be distinguished from the suggestions of imagination, he must be contented to contradict himself, and to say that the deity *cannot* reveal himself with certainty to any creature. This difficulty will at once vanish when we consider, that every revelation of God must contain some piece of information which man could neither have discovered or invented. By this *internal* evidence only, can any man assure himself that he has even an *immediate* revelation from God; but, unfortunately for Mr. Paine's argument, the same evidence will be as strong after the information has been a thousand times repeated by a thousand different persons, as it originally was. We all know instantaneously what a man may discover, and what he may not; as well as what he may or may not invent. All of us know that man's senses are conversant about earthly things; so we may doubt any testimony concerning them; because a man has talents sufficient to invent lies about these things; but no man could ever penetrate into heaven, or dive into the unknown state beyond the grave. The existence of God therefore, and the existence of a future state can be known only by revelation. The very mention of them is abundant proof that they are true; and all nations have borne witness to the force of this evidence; for none but those abusers of human reason, called *Philosophers*, ever pretended to have discovered either the one or the other.

MR. PAINE.

16. "It is a contradiction in terms and ideas to call any thing a revelation that comes to us at second hand, either verbally or in writing. Revelation is necessarily limited to the first communication. After this it is only an account of something, which that person says, was a revelation made to him; and though he may find himself obliged to believe it, it cannot be incumbent on me to believe it in the same manner; for it was not a revelation made to me, and I have only his word for it that it was made to *him*."

REMARK.

REMARK.

IN this paragraph the argument is the same as in the former, and therefore requires no other answer than what was given to it. The word of God always has *internal* evidence of itself, that it neither is nor can be the word of man.

MR. PAINE.

17. "WHEN Moses told the Children of Israel that he received the two tables of the commandments from the hand of God, they were not obliged to believe him, because they had no other authority for it than his telling them so, and I have no other authority for it than some historian telling me so. The commandments carrying no internal evidence of divinity with them. They contain some good moral precepts, such as any man qualified to be a lawgiver or a legislator could produce himself, without having recourse to supernatural intervention.

REMARK.

HERE our author begins in his tautologizing manner, repeating, without addition, the argument he had used twice before. In the latter part, however, he begins to perceive that revelation may have an *internal* evidence, though, before, he seemed to think that it would admit of no evidence but *external* hearsay. He asserts indeed that the commandments carry none of this internal evidence with them; but to this assertion I oppose mine, (which, if we believe the *Equality of Man*, must be as good as that of Thomas Paine) that they have internal evidence of their divinity; however, I do not think it proper that either he or I should set up unsupported assertions as proofs of any position whatever. I shall therefore endeavour to support my opinion by pointing out what appears to me to be this divine evidence, independent of the word of any man whatever. If then the commandments be from God, they will set him up as an object of desire preferable to this world; If they come only from man, they will allow the world to come in for an equal share at least. Now the summary of the ten commandments runs thus: Thou shalt love the *Lord thy God* with *all* thy heart, and with *all* thy soul, and with *all* thy might, &c. expressions so strong that no power of language can give them additional force. They direct our affections to an object entirely distinct from the world; whom our senses cannot figure to us. They cannot therefore have come from this world because they are directly contrary to it; and if they come not from this world, they must have come from God, for there is no third way by which they could have been brought into existence. Mr. Paine, in the conclusion of the paragraph, modestly tells us, that any man qualified to be a legislator might have invented them. I say this is *modest*, for he does not say that any man

has

has invented them; but there is an inconsistency in his words, of which he seems not to be aware. He does not say that *any* man might have invented the commandments, but that any man *qualified to be a legislator* might have invented them. But what is it that qualifies men to be legislators? I suppose it must be, in part at least, a knowledge of the precepts of morality, that is of the ten commandments; for I know no morality that is not contained in them. Mr. Paine therefore tells us that he who *knew* the commandments might have *invented* them; which is absurd.

On this subject of the commandments Mr. Paine has the following note: "This is, however, necessary, to except the declaration which says, that God *visits the sins of the fathers upon the children*. It is contrary to every principle of moral justice. To this I shall only reply; that whether it be contrary to moral justice or not, it seems to be a fact that the deity does so; of which I give the following example: Suppose a man, by his debaucheries, ruins his constitution, and begets a rickety scrophulous, or otherwise diseased child, are not the sins of the father here visited on the innocent child? When Mr. Paine replies to this argument, I shall give him another.

MR. PAINE.

18. "WHEN I am told that the Koran was written in Heaven, and brought to Mahomet by an Angel, the account comes to near the same kind of hearsay evidence, and second hand authority as the former. I did not see the Angel myself, and therefore I have a right not to believe it."

REMARK.

HERE our author once more repeats his argument; for, like the quack doctors he seems to have but one *recipe*; but what is become of the *internal* evidence mentioned in the former paragraph? If the Koran has this internal evidence, he has no right to disbelieve it; but the misfortune is, that the Koran has *internal* evidence that it is neither the word of God, nor even a story well invented by man; because it contradicts itself. The Koran owns the divinity of the Old Testament, and the divine mission of Jesus Christ. To be consistent therefore it ought to have owned that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and Saviour of mankind, and that Mahomet was only an inferior prophet; for nothing can be more plain than that Jesus Christ challenges to himself *all* power in Heaven and in Earth; consequently none is left to Mahomet or any other person.

MR. PAINE.

19 "When also I am told that a woman called the Virgin Mary, said, or gave out, that she was with child without any cohabitation with
a man,

a man, and that her betrothed husband, Joseph, said, that an Angel told him so; I have a right to believe them or not: such a circumstance required a much stronger evidence than their bare word for it: but we have not even this; for neither Mary nor Joseph wrote any such matter themselves. It is only reported by others that *they said so*. It is hearsay upon hearsay, and I do not choose to rest my belief upon such evidence."

REMARK.

THIS is now the *fifth* time that Mr. Paine has repeated his argument, and I am glad to find that he has at last a right to *believe* if he pleases; for in the former four paragraphs he seems to have had only a right to *disbelieve*. He requires stronger evidence. What evidence would he have? Would he see an angel? If he did, how would he know that he was not a Devil; for though the angel told him so, it would be only *hearsay*? Would he hear a voice from Heaven? How could he know whether it were the voice of God or not?

MR. PAINE.

20. "IT is, however, not difficult to account for the credit that was given to the story of Jesus Christ being the son of God: He was born when the heathen mythology had still some fashion and repute in the world, and that mythology had prepared the people for the belief of such a story. Almost all the extraordinary men that lived under the heathen mythology were reputed to be the sons of some of their Gods. It was not a new thing, at that time, to have been celestially begotten: the intercourse of Gods with women was then a matter of familiar opinion. Their Jupiter, according to their accounts, had cohabited with hundreds; the story had nothing in it either new, wonderful, or obscene: it was conformable to the opinions that then prevailed among the people called Gentiles or Mythologists, and it was those people only who believed it. The Jews, who had kept strictly to the belief of one God, and no more, and who had always rejected the heathen mythology, never credited the story."

REMARK.

MR. Paine has thus at last abandoned his argument of *hearsay*, which he had so often repeated; but, unluckily, being unable to supply another, he has recourse to simple assertion. To enforce this, however, as he did the argument, he repeats, in one paragraph, the same thing no less than six times over. The position is, that the heroes of the ancient heathens were reputed to be the sons of their Gods, and that we may the more firmly believe it, Mr. Paine tells us, 1. All the extraordinary men, &c. were believed to be the sons of some of their Gods. 2. It was not a new thing to be-
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lieve a man to be celestially begotten. 3. The intercourse of Gods with women was then a matter of familiar opinion. 4. Their Jupiter had cohabited with hundreds. 5. The story had nothing in it new, wonderful, &c. 6. It was conformable to the opinions that then prevailed. Certainly we must now have a *right* to believe what we have been told so often; but, as nothing is more disgusting either in writing or speaking, than to repeat the same thing over and over, so there is nothing that exposes the ignorance and futility of an author more than such a practice. Unsupported assertions can neither prove one side nor other of a question to be true; tho assertions may be made in such a manner as to overthrow themselves; and of this kind are those of Mr. *Paine*. He tells us that the heathen mythology had prepared the world for the *glory*, as he calls it, of Jesus Christ being the son of God. How came it to pass then, that Jesus Christ did not appear among those who believed this mythology, but among those who rejected it entirely? Mr. *Paine* further informs us that he was born when the heathen mythology had *some* fashion and repute in the world. Well indeed might he say that it had some fashion in the world; for, at that time the Romans, having conquered a vast number of nations, imported their gods into their city; which now contained such an assemblage of idols as had never existed before; and thus constituted that spiritual monster represented by the first beast mentioned in the revelation, who arose out of the sea. Jesus Christ therefore was born when the heathen religion was at its full height, and when it had arrived at all the grandeur which its author could give it. The doctrine he preached, and the atonement he made for the sins of mankind, his resurrection from the dead, and the spreading of the gospel, gave this monster a deadly wound, which however, was healed as shall afterwards be shown. It is impossible that the heathen mythology could prepare the world for believing in a person who was to overthrow it. If people were to be prepared by this for a belief in any person, he ought to have appeared at Rome, not in Judea. How could the Jews be prepared for the belief of the Messiah by the heathen mythology, of which they believed not, nor perhaps knew one word? It is to no purpose to tell us that they rejected Jesus Christ. They did, and still continue to expect the Messiah to come among them, and for this they appeal to their own prophets, and not to any mythology whatever. Mr. *Paine's* assertions therefore are absolutely inconsistent, and cannot possibly be true.

MR. PAINE.

21. "It is curious to observe how the theory of what is called the christian church, sprung out of the tale of the heathen mythology. A direct incorporation took place in the first instance, by making the reputed founder to be celestially begotten. The trinity of Gods

Gods that then followed was no other than a reduction of the former plurality, which was about twenty or thirty thousand. The statue of Mary succeeded the statue of Diana of Ephesus. The deification of heroes changed into the canonization of saints. The mythologists had Gods for every thing. The christian mythologists had saints for every thing. The church became as crowded with the one as the pantheon with the other; and Rome was the place of both. The christian theory is little else than the idolatry of the ancient mythologists accommodated to the purposes of power and revenue; and it yet remains to reason and philosophy to abolish the amphibious fraud."

REMARK.

WE are now furnished with another string of assertions false and inconsistent as the former. A direct incorporation, he tells us, took place by making the founder celestially begotten. But who ever heard of any founder of the heathen mythology? Every one knows that this was an heterogeneous, incoherent mass, invented according to the fancies of many different nations, and which, by itself could never be reduced into any system. Had the heathen system ever been collected into one volume, and communicated from the beginning of the world to some particular persons, for the benefit of others; and had one of those persons, to whom it was committed, pretended to be of divine original, Mr. *Paine* might with some appearance of justice, have insisted on the similarity of the pagan mythology to that of the christian religion. But, instead of this, the heathen mythology was gathered from all corners of the world, and never made its appearance in perfection till the Romans had conquered the greatest part of Europe, with a considerable part of Asia and Africa; gleaned their gods from all quarters. When thus collected, instead of any thing consistent, or forming a regular plan like the christian religion, it only consisted of a monstrous heap of fables; some of which, bearing a faint resemblance to the true doctrines of revelation, may justly be supposed to have been derived from them. How little the two religions resembled each other may easily be seen from a comparison. The heathens never could find out how the world was made. They never imagined that any of their gods could make it. Their poets, who must be supposed to have written according to the common belief of the people, give the most absurd accounts. Ovid tells us that all things were formed out of a mass of confusion called a *Chaos*; and Virgil, that they came of a *Vacuum*; Homer tells us that their supreme God Jupiter sometimes fell asleep. Ovid; again in his fable of Phæton, plainly denies the omnipotence of Jupiter; for, when the world was on fire, he attempted to extinguish it with water, but could find none; so that he was obliged to have recourse to lightning. Now the true revelation opposes the false in every one

of these particulars. The first sentence of the bible tells us that God made the world; so that, it could not either spring out of a chaos, or of a *Vacuum*. Succeeding authors indeed have mingled the true and false revelations together, by telling us that God created a chaos from which he made the world; but the New Testament denies that he is the author of confusion. David distinguishes between the true and false Gods, by telling us that *our* God created the Heavens. He also denies in express terms that God ever sleeps; and, as for his ever being in want of any thing, it is impossible we can suppose it, when we are told that "he calleth the things that are not as though they were." From this comparison therefore it is most evident, that the heathens knew not the attributes of God, though the Jews and christians did. Nothing therefore can be more false than that the christian and heathen religions had the same origin. As to the celestially begotten founder, he is said to be both the author and finisher of the christian faith; and the heathen religion hath no celestial founder to boast of. They had indeed heroes whose descent was said to be from the gods, but, who acted in many respects like *incarnate* devils; and none of these founded any religion. Their only exploits were to overcome monsters, to carry off handsome women, and to rob, murder and destroy as many men as they could. Instead of this monstrous mass of confusion, the true religion informs us that God revealed himself to the first man, the founder of the human race. When this revelation was in danger of being lost through the wickedness of men, an inspired prophet was raised up. When wickedness still increased, and the human race became totally incorrigible, so that God thought proper to destroy them, he revealed himself to Noah who was to be the second father of all mankind. When the world had again corrupted themselves, and Noah was about to die, God revealed himself to Abraham, whom Noah, under the name of Melchizedec, blessed, and seemingly resigned to him his office of being the head of the church. In Abraham's family the revelation continued for a long time, until, at last, being once more in danger of destruction through the oppression of the Israelites by Pharaoh, it was committed to Moses, and the truth of it evinced to the whole world by the miracles wrought in favour of that people. From that time the Jews continued in possession of it till it was completed by Jesus Christ, and the knowledge of it diffused through the world by the preaching of the Apostles. The corruptions that followed have nothing to do with christianity more than the absurdities which some have believed concerning the figure of the earth have to do with the sciences of astronomy and geography. It is not true that christians believe in a trinity of Gods. They believe in one divine nature possessed by three distinct persons; and I can see nothing more incredible in this than that one *human* nature

ature should be enjoyed by innumerable persons. It is not true that the statue of the Virgin Mary succeeded to that of Diana of Ephesus. Diana had no son, though she was not reported to be a virgin. Mary had a son and yet was reported to be a virgin. There cannot be two characters more opposite, and the one could never be a successor to the other. It is not true that the christian theory is little else than the idolatry of the ancient mythologists. The christian theory is nothing but what Christ and his Apostles taught; and in this there is neither the worship of saints or images recommended. The intermixture of the heathen with the christian religion, predicted in different parts of the New Testament, produced that monstrous mass of superstition represented by the second beast in the revelation, who exercised the power of the former. Thus also the deadly wound of the first beast was healed; for the heathen religion, though put a little out of its former course, still continued, and Rome having now amassed in a manner the whole wickedness, as she had formerly done the power of the world, proceeded to exercise such a system of tyranny and oppression as never was heard of since the foundation of the world; and which having now lasted nearly the specified time, 1242 years, is most evidently coming very fast to an end. These events, happening exactly as described in scripture, are so far from militating against the truth of it, that they strongly confirm it.

MR. PAINE.

22. "NOTHING that is here said can apply, even with the most distant disrespect, to the *real* character of Jesus Christ. He was a virtuous and an amiable man. The morality that he preached and practised was of the most benevolent kind; and though similar systems of morality had been preached by Confucius and some of the Greek philosophers, many years before, by the quakers since, and by many good men in all ages; it has not been exceeded by any."

REMARK.

OUR Author having now, in support of his opinions, or rather against revelation, for he himself does not support any thing) one insufficient argument, *eleven* tautologies, and five or six false assertions, crowns the whole by as gross a contradiction as ever was penned by man. After having treated in the most contemptuous manner his divine mission, and set him forth as only a new modifier of the heathen fables, he pretends to respect the real character of Jesus Christ! But what could his real character be, if his divine mission was false? We have not more evidence that he preached a single precept, than that he said "I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

live ;" that he came from God and went to God ; that God was his father, that he was before Abraham, &c. But above all, he set forth to his disciples that no morality which they could practise, without faith in him, would be sufficient to save them. Mr. Paine says, that similar systems had been preached by Confucius, and by the Quakers ; Did ever mortal hear such nonsense ! When did Confucius, when did a Greek philosopher, or when did a Quaker give themselves out for a Saviour, and maintain that they were to *die* that the wrath of God towards the whole human race might be appeased ? Let Mr. Paine produce the man, either Pagan, Turk, or Deist, in his senses or out of them, who ever undertook such a task ! With respect to his doctrine therefore Jesus Christ stands *alone*. The thought never entered into the mind of any man that ever was, and, I may add, ever will be. Like the report of the creation of the world, or of a future state, the report of a Saviour not only proves its own veracity, but proves that the person who undertook this was not man, but God ! for he thought as man never thought nor will think, and therefore was essentially different from the whole human race.

MR. PAINE.

23. JESUS CHRIST wrote no account of himself, of his birth, parentage, or any thing else. Not a line of what is called the New Testament is of his writing. The history of him is altogether the work of other people ; and as to the account given of his resurrection and ascension, it was the necessary counterpart to the story of his birth. His historians, having brought him into the world in a supernatural manner, were obliged to take him out again in the same manner, or the first part of the story must have fallen to the ground."

REMARK.

It is difficult to imagine what Mr. Paine would be at in this sentence. Does he suppose that what a man writes of himself is more credible than what others write of him ? If he does, his opinion is certainly very singular. But, whether Jesus Christ wrote of himself or not, the words attributed to him are so peculiar, that it is impossible we can suppose them to have been the invention of any man. With respect to his birth and parentage he invariably maintained that God was his father, and with him *only* he claimed any relationship ; and so very strongly did he lay claim to this, that he denied any connection with others but as they did the will of God. "Whoever does the will of my father, says he, the same is my mother, sister and brother." When somebody exclaimed, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, &c." he checked them ; saying, "Nay, rather blessed are they who do the will of my father." Will Mr. Paine say that any man ever wrote about himself in this manner, or does he know of any about whom such things were written ? Every sentence

tence attributed to Jesus Christ plainly proves the divinity of the person who spoke it. In the second part of his paragraph Mr. Paine seems willing to establish a very strange argument, as if we ought to disbelieve the New Testament because it is *consistent* with itself. The account given of his resurrection and ascension he says was a *necessary counterpart* to the story of his birth. According to Jesus Christ himself, his death and resurrection were not only a *counterpart* to his birth, but necessary to the very end for which he was born. He spoke of both in express terms before he died, nay he laid claim to immortality in such terms as never were used by man but himself. "I have power says he to lay down my life, and to take it again." I know of no person that ever said so but himself. The idea could not enter their brain. I have heard of impostors who said they would never die, but not one, that he would die and rise again. The historians of Jesus Christ might have given out that he was miraculously taken up to Heaven without death, like Enoch or Elijah, had they found nothing more necessary than to take him out of the world in a supernatural manner.

MR. PAINE.

24. "The wretched contrivance with which this latter part is told exceeds every thing that went before it. The first part, that of the miraculous conception, was not a thing that admitted of publicity; and therefore the tellers of this part of the story had this advantage, that though they might not be credited, they could not be detected. They could not be expected to prove it, because it was not one of those things that admitted of proof; and it was impossible that the person of whom it was told could prove it himself."

REMARK.

THE wretched ignorance of Mr. Paine, and his utter insufficiency to maintain his cause never appeared more evident than in this paragraph. His design in writing it seems to be to suggest some contrast between the first and the last part of our Saviour's history. But he ought to remember that the miraculous conception could not be any *invention* of the disciples of Jesus Christ, because it was spoken of many hundred years before in a book which all the Jews allowed to be of divine original. In that book it is mentioned as an extraordinary instance of the divine power. "Behold, says the Almighty, I create a new thing in the earth!" If it was an *invention* then it must have been the invention of the prophet Isaiah; but even this we cannot suppose, because the *son of God* is mentioned by David, long before Isaiah was born. He is mentioned by Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, who had a most astonishing instance of his power at the same time; nay even almost at the very creation, he is mentioned as the son of a woman, and not

not of a man. This story, therefore, or part of a story, must have been invented neither by the Apostles, nor by Isaiah, nor Daniel, nor David, but by the author of the book of Genesis, who says that God was the author of it. Now the character which was given by all these writers, and others whom I have not enumerated was entirely conformable to that given him by the apostles, which was, that he was not a man but God. According to Moses he was to exterminate evil from the creation, but in doing so was to receive some injury himself. According to David he was to sit on the right hand of God, and to see every one of his enemies destroyed. Isaiah tells us that he was to save and justify many of the human race. Nebuchadnezzar saw his immense power and superiority to this system of nature, when he walked unhurt, along with three others, in the midst of the fire. Whether is it more difficult to believe these things, or to believe that he was born of a virgin? Nay, without this last circumstance, the account would have been imperfect and contradictory; for how could a divine person be originally formed by any of the natural powers of this system? Taking this view of the matter, the miraculous conception is but a slight and trivial circumstance. To attack revelation properly, Mr. Paine ought to have proved, that all the things related of Jesus Christ are *impossibilities* on the part of God; for if he does not this, every one of them will prove themselves to be true. But let us go on.

MR. PAINE.

25. "But the resurrection of a dead person from the grave, and his ascension through the air, is a thing very different as to the evidence it admits of, to the invisible conception of a child in the womb. The resurrection and ascension, supposing them to have taken place, admitted of public and ocular demonstration, like that of the ascension of a balloon, or the sun at noon day, to all Jerusalem at least. A thing which every body is required to believe, requires that the proof and evidence of it should be equal to all, and universal; and as the public visibility of this last related act was the only evidence that could give sanction to the former part, the whole of it falls to the ground, because that evidence was never given. Instead of this, a small number of persons, not more than eight or nine, are introduced as proxies for the whole world, to say they *saw it*, and all the rest of the world are called upon to believe it. But it appears that Thomas did not believe the resurrection: and as they say, would not believe, without having ocular and manual demonstration himself. *So neither will I*; and the reason is equally as good for me and for every other person as for Thomas.

REMARK.

REMARK.

IN this we have, I suppose, all that Mr. Paine can say against the resurrection. But though we should allow that this event had less of human evidence than it has, this cannot prove it to be a falsehood. Before this can be done he ought to prove it inconsistent or impossible. We ought always to remember, that the resurrection of our Saviour is not an event that stands by itself unconnected with others. It is most strongly connected with the life which Jesus led upon the earth. That life, in every part, in every action, and in every word, pointed him out to be a divine person; and when once this is allowed, the difficulty is not how such a person could be raised from the dead, but how he came to die at all. Allowing him once to be dead, his resurrection follows of course, and we must believe it whether any person had seen it or not. Peter speaks of it as a dictate of common sense, "that it was not possible that he should be holden of death," yet the very same Peter, when our Saviour was alive, could not believe that ever he would die; and expressed his unbelief in such strong terms, that he received a much more severe rebuke than was given to Thomas, who doubted of the resurrection. Jesus himself was well aware of the difficulty and repugnance to human nature which must be felt in assenting to this truth, and therefore removed it. It is plainly a contradiction to say that he who is superior to death should be subject to it; but Jesus solved the difficulty by representing his death as a voluntary act. "I lay down my life, says he, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and to take it again:" Mr. Paine ought to have endeavoured to sap the foundation of Christianity by showing, if he could, that, after evil was introduced into the world, God *could not*, or *would not* expel it. But, waving all this, it appears that the resurrection, considered as an unconnected fact, had the highest evidence that human testimony can give in any case, and which indeed is very seldom given, viz. the attestation of friends and foes. Our author complains that all Jerusalem did not see him ascend; but the half of Jerusalem did not see him put in the grave; and it was necessary that those who saw him buried, should also see him rise. Others who did not know him personally, and did not see him put dead into the grave, had no business in the matter; for though they had seen a person come out of the grave, they would not have known whether it was he or not. His enemies were interested in proving that he did not rise, but even before he was put in his grave, they were obliged to own, from signs as evident at the sun at noon day, viz. the sun himself being darkened, &c. that he was the Son of God. Here was something evident to *all Jerusalem*, and, if *all Jerusalem* had chosen to watch his grave, they would undoubtedly have had the evidence that followed. But as they did

not chuse this, but committed the charge of the sepulchre to the Roman guards, they alone could receive the evidence, and say whether he did rise from the dead or not. Now, from the account given of this event by Matthew. I think it is plain that the guards had evidence in abundance; and this evidence they gave to the people of Jerusalem, who if they had chosen, might have had the same, or perhaps, still stronger, by attending the sepulchre. That the guards should be deprived of their senses by the vision may very naturally be believed. It is also natural to think that they would tell what they saw, and that the Pharisees would attempt to corrupt them, in order to save their own credit. But let us only consider whether these things be *possible* or not; I mean whether or not they are within the compass of Omnipotence! If they are, how can Mr. Paine prove that they did not happen? If he wishes for human testimony, that of the guards is one, and a very strong one; because they were present at the very moment. The testimony of the Apostles who saw Jesus Christ himself afterwards, was rendered more probable to neutral persons by what the guards had told. That the guards should afterwards, for the sake of money, contradict themselves, and tell an inconsistent story, is by no means incredible in people of that description; and never can invalidate the truth of the relation.

THE next thing which Mr. Paine finds fault with is, that our Saviour was not seen by all Jerusalem while he ascended into Heaven. This objection shows only the extreme ignorance and silliness of its author. Let us suppose that he had been seen by every individual in Jerusalem, still this was but a small part of the world, and the inhabitants of Rome, or any other distant city would have had the same reason to disbelieve that Mr. Paine supposes himself to have at this moment. Nay, though, by some extraordinary miracle, he should have been seen by every individual who lived on the earth at that time, we could not have the testimony of all of them at this day, nor, according to Mr. Paine's maxim, would we have been obliged to believe it. The evidence which our author calls for therefore is in its own nature insufficient, and consequently unworthy of God, while he rejects that strong and invincible evidence drawn from the character of God himself, and of the person who is said to have risen from the dead.

BUT in the evidence which Mr. Paine requires there is a difficulty which his total ignorance of every kind of religion makes him overlook; and it is this. In whatever manner men may play the hypocrite, and put on a placid countenance when they are really displeased, it is not so with God. While Jesus Christ was upon earth, he lived the life of a man, and expressed his displeasure as a man. Since he rose from the dead he lives the life of God, and expresses his displeasure as God. While on earth therefore he saw and conversed promiscuously both with friends and foes. Af-

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ter his resurrection he conversed only with his friends, and was seen only by them; for, had he been seen by others, he would have appeared in the terrors of an offended deity; the consequence of which must have been the everlasting destruction of every one who saw him. The scripture is perfectly consistent with itself, therefore, when it informs us that the ascension of Jesus Christ was seen only by those who believed in him; and, throughout the whole, the same idea is kept up. When Adam was expelled from Paradise, the entrance was guarded by *Cherubim* and a flaming sword, which threatened destruction to those who approached it, and no doubt would have destroyed such as had the fool hardiness to attempt it. When the Israelites passed through the Red Sea, the appearance of the Deity was light to them, and darkness to the Egyptians. When he appeared to the Jews on Sinai, nothing could be more terrible than the appearance, and yet this was not the Deity himself, but a representation of him. When the angel appeared to Balaam, he signified his displeasure by having a drawn sword in his hand. The same appearance was exhibited at the plague in Jerusalem, where an angel was visible to the whole city, with a sword stretched over it. All these were but symbolical representations; but if these were terrible, and destructive to the enemies of God, what must the reality be? When *one* angel was seen by the watch who guarded our Saviour's grave, they fell down as if they had been dead. What would have been the consequence if they had seen *all* the angels, and if all of them had exerted their power against them? Since our Saviour rose from the dead all the angels have been subject to him, and as naturally obeyed him as the powers of our body obey our reason or wisdom, such as it is. Had he therefore showed himself in his glory at that time, the world would have been at an end.

Thus the scripture is perfectly consistent with itself when it informs us that God, or his angels make *one* appearance to those with whom they are at enmity, and *another* to those with whom they are in friendship. The angel whose presence had almost destroyed the guards, made no such terrific appearance to the women who came to see the grave; nor will Mr. Paine be able to show, throughout the whole scripture, the smallest inconsistency either in this or any other respect. But why need I quote scripture? The Turks are infinitely more consistent than Mr. Paine. They tell us that *Mohomet* having requested the angel *Gabriel* to shew him his real figure in Heaven, the latter put on such a tremendous appearance that the prophet fainted. On this *Gabriel*, again assuring the appearance of a man, asked him what would have been the consequence if he had seen some other angel, whose name I have forgot; but who it seems would have been still more terrible than *Gabriel*. Even in the Arabian Nights Entertainments, where *Aladdin* con-

ducts some prince or other to the king of the Genii, he informs him that if the spirit was displeased, he would appear in the shape of some terrible monster, but, if otherwise, in the shape of a handsome man. But I need not quote even the Turkish fables; the heathens are more consistent than Mr. Paine. They tell us that *Semele*, one of the mistresses of Jupiter, having insisted on his caressing her in his celestial appearance, he indeed complied with her request, but she was burnt to death by lightning. Thus, all mankind, of all descriptions, agree that the terrors of divine majesty are too great to be borne by man in his present state. To Mr. Paine only it belongs to credit the wonderful contradiction that man can with impunity behold Omnipotence not only in *arms*, but *armed against himself*! It is undoubtedly one principal source of disbelief of the christian religion, that men imagine themselves capable of living though they *see God* without any medium but their own faculties of perception. The least consideration may convince us of the contrary. The senses of man are all limited, and as long as he remains without any divine faculty, the Deity must remain at an infinite distance. If he should appear to us as light, we must be struck blind by it; if he speaks to us, his voice must deafen us; if he touch us it must be like fire to destroy our bodies; because in every case the organs of sense have a greater force impressed upon them than they are able to bear. Add to this that the Deity is omnipresent. To see him therefore as he is, we must see him before, behind, and on each side of us, and thus were a man to see God, in our present situation, it must be equivalent to being thrown into a lake of unquenchable fire; and is indeed the same with the torments of hell spoken of in scripture. Whatever may be thought of this reasoning, it appears to have been plainly the opinion of the apostle Paul, who at his conversion saw a divine light. It exceeded the brightness of the sun, and it struck him blind, nor could the blindness be removed but by divine power. To remove this distance, insuperable by man, to bring him into the presence of God, and instead of being destroyed, to make him infinitely happy thereby, it was indispensibly necessary that man should be some way or other invested with the faculties of the Deity. But how was this to be done? Either man must of himself assume the nature of God, or God must assume the nature of man. That man should assume the nature of God is plainly impossible; let Mr. Paine say whether it be possible for God to assume the nature of man or not? If he says "No," I must congratulate him on having discovered one thing which is impossible to Omnipotence itself! If he says "Yes," this is what the Bible also says, and it will instantly prove itself to be true in the very same manner that other parts of revelation do. I must conclude therefore that the resurrection and ascension of our Saviour are proved by evidence infinitely superior

to that of any man, and that such arguments as our author has yet brought against revelation, are totally insufficient.

In the last part of our author's 25th paragraph, he affects the same infidelity with the apostle Thomas; but here he is guilty of an inconsistency from which Thomas was totally free. The latter demanded ocular and manual demonstration while that could be given, *i. e.* while our Saviour still continued to appear on earth, and therefore he got it; but, to Mr. Paine, (who requires it when our Saviour is gone into Heaven to return no more till the end of the world) it will certainly not be given.

MR. PAINE.

26. "It is in vain to palliate or disguise this matter. The story as far as relates to the supernatural part, has every mark of fraud and imposition stamped upon it. Who were the authors of it is as impossible for us now to know, as it is for us to be assured that the books in which the account is related were written by the persons whose names they bear. The best surviving evidence we now have respecting this evidence is the Jews. They are regularly descended from the people who lived in the times this resurrection and ascension is said to have happened, and they say *it is not true*. It has long appeared to me a strange inconsistency to cite the Jews as a proof of the truth of the story. It is just the same as if a man was to say, I will prove the truth of what I have told you, by producing the people who say it is false!"

REMARK.

THE first part of this paragraph requires no answer. Our author's *assertion* that the account of our Saviour's resurrection, "has all the appearance of fraud and imposition," has been already shown to be false. I know not who appeal to the Jews for a proof of our Saviour's resurrection. I am sure that I never did. But their infidelity is of no use to Mr. Paine; for they do believe in a Saviour tho' they deny that Jesus Christ is the person.

MR. PAINE

27. "That such a person as Jesus Christ existed, and that he was crucified, which was the mode of execution at that day, are historical relations strictly within the limits of probability. He preached most excellent morality, and the equality of man; but he preached also against the corruptions and avarice of the Jewish priests; and this brought upon him the hatred and vengeance of the whole order of priesthood. The accusation which those priests brought against him was that of sedition and conspiracy against the Roman government, to which the Jews were then subject and tributary; and it is not improbable that the Roman government might have some

secret apprehension of the effects of his doctrine, as well as the Jewish priests; neither is it improbable that Jesus Christ had in contemplation the delivery of the Jewish nation from the bondage of the Romans. Between the two, however, this virtuous reformer and revolutionist lost his life."

REMARK.

It is wearisome and disgusting to comment on such paragraphs. This consists of a string of *probabilities*, with a *fact* tacked to their tail, which renders the whole ridiculous. In the first sentence it seems that our Saviour's *existence* is only a matter of probability, though in the last his *death* turns out to be a *certainty*! Another of these *probabilities* seems to me very *improbable*; namely, that the *Romans* suspected Jesus Christ of conspiring against them. Had they done so, it is natural to suppose that *they* and not the *Jews* would have laid hold on him; but, instead of this, the Roman governor was not willing to meddle with him, and would have set him at liberty if he had not been prevented by the Jews. A third *probability* of Mr. Paine is absolutely *incredible*; that Jesus Christ actually did conspire. Instead of this, he insisted that his kingdom was not of this world; and would not allow, even in his greatest distress, those to fight for him who would have done so; and when one of his disciples had actually struck a servant of the high priest, he once more informs him that he was connected with none but God. "Thinkest thou, says he, that I cannot now pray to my father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels, but how then shall the scripture be fulfilled?" Hence it appears that his death was only a voluntary submission to a power which he could have crushed to atoms in a moment with a word of his mouth.

MR. PAINE.

28. "It is upon this plain narrative of facts, together with another case I am going to mention, that the christian mythologists, calling themselves the christian church, have erected their fable; which, for absurdity and extravagance, is not exceeded by any thing that is to be found in the mythology of the ancients."

REMARK.

Now, it seems, the *probabilities* of the last sentence are turned into *facts*, upon which, with the addition of a heathen fable to be mentioned in the next paragraph, the fable of the christian church is founded. I could have wished that Mr. Paine had informed us what he means by the *fable* of the christian church. If he means the doctrines delivered in the sacred writings, I deny that they are connected with any fables whatever. If he means the corruptions
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and fables mixed with these doctrines, I also deny that there is any connexion between them.—But let us hear.

MR. PAINE.

29. "The ancient mythologists tell that the race of giants made war against Jupiter, and that one of them threw an hundred rocks against him at one throw; that Jupiter defeated him with thunder, and confined him afterwards under Mount Etna, and that every time the giant turns himself, Mount Etna belches fire. It is here easy to see that the circumstance of the mountain, that of its being a volcano, suggested the idea of the fable; and that the fable is made to fit and wind itself up with that circumstance.

30. "THE christian mythologists tell, that their Satan made war against the Almighty, who defeated him, and confined him afterwards, not under a mountain, but in a pit. It is here easy to see that the first fable suggested the idea of the second; for the fable of Jupiter and the giants was told many hundred years before that of Satan."

REMARK.

ON the first of these paragraphs I have nothing to remark; but in the second, if by the christian mythologists he means the scripture writers, his assertion is absolutely false; for no such thing is to be found in scripture. If he means the author of *Paradise Lost*, or such books as that, I am not concerned to defend them.

MR. PAINE.

31. THUS far the ancient and the christian mythologists differ very little from each other. But the latter have contrived to carry the matter much further. They have contrived to connect the fabulous part of the story of Jesus Christ with the fable originating from Mount Etna: and in order to make all the parts of the story tie together, they have taken to their aid the traditions of the Jews; for the christian mythology is made up partly from the ancient mythology, and partly from the Jewish traditions.

REMARK.

THIS paragraph seems to be a repetition of the last with the addition of a few more falsehoods. I have already shown that the things related of Jesus Christ are absolutely distinct from any fable whatever; nay they are *essentially* different from any thing that ever was related of man.

MR. PAINE.

32. "THE christian mythologists, after having confined Satan
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in a pit, were obliged to let him out again, to bring on the sequel of the fable. He is then introduced into the garden of Eden, in the shape of a snake or a serpent; and in that shape, he enters into familiar conversation with Eve, who is no way surprised to hear a snake talk; and the issue of this *tete a tete* is, that he persuades her to eat an apple, and the eating of that apple damns all mankind."

REMARK.

THIS is in the same style with the rest. With respect to the Bible it is absolutely false. There is no mention there of Satan being either put into a pit or taken out of one; neither is there any mention of his introduction into the garden. The serpent is spoken of as one already there with the rest of the creation; and being "more subtle than *any* beast which the Lord God had made," we come to know that he was some being of a nature different from any of them. Mr. Paine makes light of the matter of Eve's eating an apple, but he does not take notice that this was an apple which God had forbidden her to eat. This is the very essential part which gives consistence to the whole, and Mr. Paine has the very same evidence of the apple being forbidden, that he has of its being eat at all.

As our Author treats with such contempt the Scripture account of the manner in which evil was first introduced into the world, I shall here enter into a vindication of it. Though Mr. Paine hath not any where mentioned the existence of such a thing as *evil* in his performance, I must conclude that he believes there is something of this kind because he writes against christianity. I shall therefore, for arguments sake, allow that every thing is perfectly right in this world except the christian system; and, if it could be removed, there would not be a single blot in the whole creation. Whence then came this wicked system? Does it exist of it itself, or was it produced by any cause? If it is self-existent, then it is a *deity*, and our author will find it vain to contend against it. If it was produced by any cause, who was he that invented it? If it was the deity, then it is divine revelation, and will be equally impregnable to Mr. Paine. If it was an inferior being, that being must be *Satan*, or *Cerberus*, or *Pluto*, if our author dislikes the scripture name; though I cannot help thinking that the name of *Satan*, that is, an *adversary*, is exceedingly proper for the being, whoever he was, that introduced evil.

BUT Mr. Paine will say, the evil which we see in this world, that is the christian religion, proceeded neither from God, nor any intermediate agent, but from the folly of man himself. Be it so; but I wish to know who made man a fool? Was it the deity, or any other person. If it was the deity, then *he* is the author of evil, that is of the christian system. If man made himself a fool, how came it to pass that a creature made *wise* by the almighty should eradicate

cate the wisdom given by its creator, and put *folly* in its stead, which had no existence at the time, and which God never created? If the difficulty here is insurmountable, it will not be in the least diminished by substituting, instead of the christian system, death, pain, disease, and all kinds of misery, as the real evils of this world. How come they to appear among the works of an infinitely good and merciful being? The same argument will bring back the same dilemma. Either death is *self-existent*, or it has a cause. If self-existent it is a deity, and we run into the doctrine of the manicheans, who believed in two Gods, a good and an evil one. If death originate from any being, we may call him *serpent*, *devil*, or what we please; the character will still be the same.

Now, if man was created immortal by the deity, and we can suppose nothing else of an infinitely good being, it was impossible that he could have the *power*, even though we should suppose him to have had the inclination, to make himself mortal. As little could any other being make him mortal, unless we suppose him equal or superior to God in power. The only way therefore in which this could take place was, by the withdrawing from man that exercise of the divine power which produces immortality. This protection could not be withdrawn, while man acted conformably to the will of his maker. In the situation that Adam and Eve were at their first creation, how could they disobey the commands of God? The duties of morality, which bind us, were not applicable to them. They could not *steal*, because there was no other but themselves. They could not *covet*, because the whole earth was their own. They could not *kill*, because they knew not what death was. If any command therefore was given them, it must have been something relative to the means of of their subsistence. The tree of knowledge was forbidden them, not as any arbitrary or positive command of God, but to instruct them how to preserve their life; that they might not think that the fruits on which they subsisted were capable of giving life independent of the deity; for whenever they imagined this, there was an end of all connexion between God and them. Now it is evident, that, as soon as this command was given, the senses of man must draw him one way, and the word of God another. The reason is, that he *saw* the tree, and knew that that he subsisted by such fruits, but he did not *see* God, nor perceive the connection between keeping his commands, and the preservation of life.

In this situation then was Eve when beholding the pleasant tree before her eyes, and she seems to have reasoned precisely in the manner that Mr. Paine himself does in his 145th paragraph. "Any person," says he, "who has made observations on the state and progress of the human mind, by observing his own, cannot but have observed, that there are two distinct classes of what are called thoughts: those that we produce in ourselves by reflection and the *act of thinking*, and those that bolt into the mind of their own accord."

I have always made it a rule to treat these voluntary visitors with civility, taking care to examine if they were worth entertaining, and it is from them I have acquired almost all the knowledge I have."

IN commenting upon these words of Mr. Paine I do not pretend to explain what he means by *producing* thoughts by the *act of thinking*; but, setting this aside, I think it is most evident that our author believes that there are thoughts suggested to his mind which do not originate from himself. If they do not originate from himself, they must be self-existent, or derived from some cause. If self-existent, then they are God: if they proceed from any external cause, then, as they are good or bad, we may conclude that they proceed from God, or from the devil, the serpent or what we please to call him. Now, from the Scripture account, it appears, that Eve, (tho' probably at that time much younger than Mr. Paine was when he wrote his treatise) knew very well this distinction of thoughts into two classes, and that the thought "Hath God said so," was none of her own. Like Mr. Paine too she "treated this voluntary visitor with civility;" upon which another presently bolted into her mind, viz. that God had told her a lie; and this being likewise civilly entertained, she acted accordingly; and, like Mr. Paine, likewise acquired knowledge; though not of the most pleasant kind.

I can therefore see nothing in all this story of Adam, Eve, the apple, and the serpent, one jot more absurd than what Mr. Paine has said in the paragraph just now quoted; only that Eve knew who it was that suggested the thought to her, and Mr. Paine does not. In every other respect he shows himself to be a true son of Eve; for neither she nor Mr. Paine considered whether the thoughts were good or bad, but only whether they seemed to be "worth entertaining." Hence, in the very next paragraph, we find the *deistical* Mr. Paine founding his belief upon a thought not produced by the act of *thinking*, but which bolted into his mind, or, in other words, was *revealed* to him when he was an infant. "I well remember, says he, when about seven or eight years of age, hearing a sermon read by a relation of mine, who was a great devotee of the church, upon the subject of what is called *redemption by the death of the son of God*. After the sermon was ended, I went into the garden, and as I was going down the garden steps, (for I perfectly recollect the spot) I revolted at the recollection of what I had heard, and thought to myself that it was making God Almighty act like a passionate man, that killed his own son, when he could not revenge himself any other way; and, as I was sure a man would be hanged that did such a thing, I could not see for what purpose they preached such sermons." Now, I think, had Mr. Paine been possessed of a little of that *modesty* which became a gentleman of his years, he would have supposed that he had not understood the matter right, and would have inquired farther concerning it. Instead of this he not
only

only defends the pertness and impudence he then possessed, but, as if it had really been *inspiration*, he would have us to take this notion of his for a rule of faith. "I moreover believe, says he, that any system of religion that has any thing in it that shocks the mind of a child, cannot be a true system."

Thus we see, that both Eve and Mr. Paine trusted entirely to the thoughts of their own hearts, and both acted precisely in the same manner. Eve called God a liar in what he had told her, and Mr. Paine calls him a liar in what he has told us. The scripture tells us plainly that he who trusts his own heart is a fool, and produces an example of one who acted in a very different manner. This was Jesus Christ himself. The first temptation he underwent, was exactly similar to that of Eve. Being alone, in a desert place, and exhausted with fasting, the thought was suggested (for I do not believe that either to him or to Eve the devil did, or could appear) that he should command the stones to become bread. This implied that bread had, of itself, and independent of God, some power to preserve life; and was therefore checked by a sentence spoken by the Deity, that man should not live by bread alone, &c. This shows an *essential* difference between that person and Eve, as well as between him and Mr. Paine. It likewise points out to us a method of treating these thoughts which suddenly come into our minds; and which, as I believe they do not originate from ourselves, I am afraid are more frequently the suggestions of an evil than a good agent.

I must conclude therefore, that there is nothing at which Mr. Paine can justly laugh, or turn into ridicule, in the scripture account of the fall of man. If we inquire into the origin of evil, we are obliged to own that a created being is the cause. If Mr. Paine owns that thoughts are suggested to our minds by some external agent, then if these thoughts are bad, there can be no objection to our calling that agent the *serpent*, the *devil*, or *satan*. It is not said that Eve *saw* the serpent; and there is not the least reason to suppose that any other thing passed, at that time, than a deliberation or consultation with herself, whether she should eat the forbidden fruit or not. It may reasonably be asked why the name of *serpent* is given to this being; but this is a subject which does not at present lie in my way to consider. It is sufficient to know, that, among the ancient nations, the serpent was an emblem of life. The curse pronounced upon the serpent therefore, that it should go upon its belly and eat dust, was, that the vital principle of this world should be low and grovelling, never rising farther than earthly things; that it should destroy the very life it gave, and finally be destroyed by another and more pure vital principle, viz. Jesus Christ. He too was represented by a serpent to the Jews; and, as I said before, this creature was an emblem of life among all the ancient nations. Hence it became sacred to Esculapius the God of physic, and to this day is taken, by the physicians, as the emblem of their science.

I have in this remark charged Mr. Paine with supposing himself to be *inspired*. This seems to be an inconsistency, but is by no means uncommon among deistical writers. Lord Herbert, who wrote a book in favour of deism some time ago, could not be satisfied unless he had a testimony from God that it was agreeable to him; that is, unless he had a *revelation* informing him that there really was *no* revelation! Absurd as this was, he pretends that he really got it; for, having said his prayers, he was answered by some kind of a voice; which, though it uttered neither speech nor language intelligible by man, he took as a sign of the divine concurrence; and the book was published accordingly. Mr. Volney, in his treatise entitled the Ruins of Palmyra, hath presented the world with a system of such horrid nonsense, that Mr. Paine's treatise, bad as it is, looks like the wisdom of Solomon in comparison of it; yet even this monstrous trash he could not publish without introducing it as brought from Heaven by a celestial spirit! Mr. Paine's inspiration consists in thoughts that bolt into his mind, nobody knows why or wherefore; and from these it seems he has derived almost all his knowledge. How he reconciles this with what he afterwards says, that all human knowledge is derived from *the stars*, I cannot imagine. "It is an idea, says he (par: 169) I have never lost sight of, that all our knowledge of science is derived from the revelations (exhibited to our eye, and from thence to our understanding) which those several planets, or worlds, of which our system is composed, make in their circuit round the sun." From these passages, we may, I think, very reasonably conclude, that Mr. Paine is inspired with science and mechanical knowledge, by the planets and *moon*; for it seems he does not go the length of the fixed stars; and with his theology by *nothing at all*. That I may not, however, seem to insist too long on a subject which, were it not for the self-sufficiency of our author, would be below notice, I shall conclude with making some observations on his 96th Paragraph where he calls the 19th Psalm a *deistical* composition. In what manner he has read this psalm, I cannot conceive; but we certainly find there as much mention of *revelation*, as in any other part of scripture. It is there said, "the *law* of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the *testimony* of the Lord is pure, making wise the simple; the *commandment* of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes," &c. If this be deism, it is plain that each Deist must believe himself to have a personal intercourse with the Deity, and thus, instead of *one* revelation, they must believe in an innumerable multitude of them.

MR. PAINE.

" 33. " AFTER giving Satan this triumph over the whole creation, one would have supposed that the church mythologists would have been kind enough to send him back again to the pit; or, if they had not done this, that they would have put a mountain upon him

him (for they say that their faith can remove a mountain) or put him *under* a mountain, as the former mythologists had done, to prevent his getting again among the women, and doing more mischief. But, instead of this, they leave him at large without even obliging him to give his parole. The secret of which is, that they could not do without him; and after being at the trouble of making him, they bribed him to stay. They promised him *ALL* the Jews, *ALL* the Jews by anticipation, nine tenths of the world beside, and Mahomet into the bargain. After this, who can doubt of the bountifulness of the christian mythology?

REMARK.

As it is below any man to write nonsense like this, so it is below him to give any answer.

MR PAINE.

34. "HAVING thus made an insurrection, and a battle in Heaven, in which none of the combatants could be either killed or wounded,—put Satan into the pit—let him out again—given him a triumph over the whole creation,—damned all mankind by the eating of an apple, these christian mythologists bring the two ends of their fable together. They represent this virtuous and amiable man Jesus Christ, to be at once God and man, and also the son of God, celestially begotten on purpose to be sacrificed, because they say, that Eve in her longing had eaten an apple."

REMARK.

STILL we have the same nonsensical misrepresentation. I know not whether our author takes his idea of a battle in Heaven from Milton's Paradise Lost, or from the 12th chapter of the Revelation. It seems most probably to be taken from the former. If from the latter, however, I must observe, that this battle, whatever it was, took place after the ascent of our Saviour into Heaven; and after John wrote his Revelation. In the first chapter of that book we find the Apostle commanded to write the things which he had seen, the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter. In the beginning of the fourth chapter, he receives a call to come up to Heaven, and he will be shown things which should be hereafter. The first three chapters therefore contain all the account that was given of things present; the rest of the prophecy, of which the war in heaven is a part, was all posterior to John's time. In this paragraph we have the story of the apple twice repeated, so great is Mr Paine's inclination for tautology; and, each time, with the same wilful misrepresentation as before; so great is his disposition to act in an unfair and uncandid manner.

MR.

MR. PAINE.

35. "PUTTING aside every thing that might excite laughter by its absurdity, or detestation by its profaneness, and confining ourselves merely to an examination of the parts, it is impossible to conceive a story more derogatory to the Almighty, more inconsistent with his wisdom, more contradictory to his power, than this is.

REMARK.

I HAVE already observed, over and over, that the story told by Mr. Paine is by no means that of the scripture. If he laughs at the absurdity of *his own* story, or is disgusted with its profaneness, why did he not make it better?

MR. PAINE,

36. "IN order to make for it a foundation to rise upon, the inventors were under the necessity of giving to the being, whom they call Satan, a power equally as great, if not greater, than they attribute to the Almighty. They have not only given him the power of liberating himself from the pit, after what they call his fall, but they have made that power afterwards increase to infinity. Before this fall, they represent him only as an angel of limited existence, as they represent the rest. After his fall he becomes, by their account, omnipresent. He occupies the whole immensity of space.

REMARK.

IN the former paragraph, after deciding in such a peremptory manner on the demerit of this story, one would have thought that we had done with it; but Mr. Paine seems never to be satisfied with his own arguments. After having bestowed upon the doctrine of his adversaries, misrepresented indeed by himself, all the epithets of folly, absurdity, and profaneness, he still seems to have forgot something; and therefore begins over again, as tho' nothing had been said. The present paragraph begins with the misrepresented account of scripture, of which Mr. Paine seems to be so fond, and on which he appears to plume himself so much. The last part has indeed something new, viz. That Satan is said to be omnipresent. I know not what opinions the people called Mythologists may entertain concerning him, neither is it my business to inquire; but, if we may believe Satan's account of himself, in the book of Job, he "goes to and fro on the face of the earth, and walks up and down in it." I have heard, however, that little credit is due to Satan himself, and therefore I would pay no regard to this account, did I not find it confirmed by other passages of Scripture. In the New Testament it is said not only that he goes about, but that he goes about like a *roaring Lion*. He is also said

to be *the prince of the powers of the air*, and the spirit that worketh in the *children of disobedience*. Such omnipresence therefore as we ascribe to the air, to that part of it, whatever it is, that is the immediate means of preserving our life, such may we also ascribe to the devil. But this is by no means the omnipresence of the Deity. According to this account, if we could transport ourselves beyond our terrestrial atmosphere, we might reasonably hope to be beyond the reach of the devil; but it would not be so with respect to the Deity. Of him it is said, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I fly from thy presence? If I ascend into Heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in Hell, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there thy hand shall hold me. If I say surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me." It would much exceed the limits of this treatise were I to enter into an investigation, of the nature of evil spirits, drawn from the different parts of revelation. In general I shall only say that I believe the creature called *the Devil* to be no other than that power of life, whatever it is, that is diffused over all the surface of the earth, and by which our senses and natural existence in this world are preserved. His angels are those inferior powers by which the beauties of the creation are manifested either to our bodies or minds. As long as these powers excited in the mind of man no thought contrary to the command of God, they continued to be angels of light; but when, by their intervention, the mind of man was drawn aside to love this world, and to pursue the enjoyment of it rather than his maker, they became *devils*. I believe therefore that every one of the created angels fell; and, as for the holy angels, I believe them to be uncreated; the executive powers of the Deity himself; and the same with that divine person, in scripture, called the *Holy Ghost*. I have not room to give my reasons for believing all this. I mention it only to shew the immense disparity between what appears to me to be the true scripture doctrine and that set forth by Mr. Paine; and why, holding the opinions that I do, I must always treat with contempt the silly nonsense charged by Mr. Paine, on the scriptures.

MR. PAINE.

"37. "Not content with this deification of Satan, they represent him as defeating by stratagem, in the shape of an animal of the creation, all the power and wisdom of the Almighty. They represent him as having compelled the Almighty to the *direct necessity* either of surrendering the whole creation to the government and sovereignty of this Satan, or of capitulating for its redemption by coming down upon earth, and exhibiting himself upon a cross in the shape of a man".

REMARKS

REMARK.

WHAT has been remarked on the former paragraph will show why I look upon this as unworthy of any notice.

MR. PAINE.

38. "HAD the inventors of this story told it the contrary way, that is, had they represented the Almighty as compelling Satan to exhibit *himself* on a cross, in the shape of a snake, as a punishment for his new transgression, the story would have been less absurd, less contradictory. But, instead of this, they make the transgressor triumph, and the Almighty fall."

REMARK.

HERE Mr. Paine compliments himself on his wisdom in finding out a better scheme of religion than what he calls the christian system. I shall only quote the words of Solomon. "Seest thou a man *wise in his own conceit*; there is more hope of a *fool* than of him."

MR. PAINE.

39. "THAT many good men have believed this strange fable, and lived very good lives under that belief (for credulity is not a crime) is what I have no doubt of. In the first place they were educated to believe it, and they would have believed any thing else in the same manner. There are also many who have been so enthusiastically enraptured by what they conceived to be the infinite love of God to man, in making a sacrifice of himself, that the vehemence of the idea has forbidden and deterred them from examining into the absurdity and profaneness of the story. The more unnatural any thing is, the more is it capable of becoming the object of dismal admiration."

REMARK.

Now we have a piece of downright nonsense. After having set forth the christian religion in the most *atrocious* light, it turns out at last an harmless tale, which any good man may believe, provided he is brought up in the belief, without being a bit the worse. But if this be the case, if the christian religion may be believed without any harm, why is Mr. Paine at so much trouble to make us disbelieve it? as it seems we would be no better though we became profelytes to his system, if he has any. His sentence that many have been so enthusiastically enraptured, &c. is absolutely destitute of meaning. In other words it is, "Many have been so fond of the Gospel that their love for it prevented them from examining its falsehood; that is, many have believed it so firmly that they did not see it to be false"! Did not our author know that they

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must believe the gospel to be true, previous to their loving it? and nobody can believe any thing without some evidence which appears satisfactory to him, whatever it may do to others. I know not what he means by *dismal admiration*, and therefore cannot say any thing to his last sentence.

MR. PAINE.

40. "BUT, if objects for gratitude and admiration are our desire, do they not present themselves every hour to our eyes? Do we not see a fair creation prepared to receive us the instant we are born—a world furnished to our hands that cost nothing? Is it we that light up the Sun; that pour down the rain; and fill the earth with abundance? Whether we sleep or wake, the vast machinery of the universe still goes on. Are these things, and the blessings they indicate in future, nothing to us? Can our gross feelings be excited by no other subjects than tragedy and suicide? Or, is the gloomy pride of man become so intolerable, that nothing can flatter it but a sacrifice of the creator?"

REMARK.

THAT the visible creation is a *witness* of God's character I do not deny. The Bible tells that it is so; but the Bible is another witness, without which the language of creation would be absolutely unintelligible. We know that the heat of the Sun cherishes us, but it also cherishes the poisonous Serpent and Scorpion to destroy us. The same Sun that brings to perfection the fruits of the earth, hatches the eggs of the Locusts that devour them. The rain pours down and causes the earth to bring forth vegetables, but the inundation sweeps away the abundance which the gentle rain had produced. Though the world be furnished to our hands, Mr. Paine must know very little of the world indeed, if he does not know that it costs people some trouble to maintain themselves in it. "Do we not see, says Mr. Paine, a fair creation prepared to receive us the instant we are born?" It may be so; but how come the fair sex to suffer so much in this fair creation while they are bringing us into the world? Certainly their sufferings at this time are sufficient to suggest some idea of cruelty in the being who inflicted them without any cause; for, according to Mr. Paine, it must have been without cause, if the woman had committed no transgression. At least if these sufferings are objects of admiration, it must have a little of the *dismal* cast in it; but, how far they are calculated to excite gratitude, those who have felt them can best tell. With regard to the reception people meet with on their first coming into this world, it certainly cannot at all times indicate either goodness or beneficence in the creator; at least to those who disbelieve revelation. Let us suppose a poor girl seduced by one

one of those rascals with which this fair creation abounds. She proves with child and he abandons her; her friends turn their backs upon her, and she sets off for some distant place. By the way she is taken with the pains of child birth, a storm comes on, and she expires a few minutes after her child is born. Has this helpless infant, supposing it at that time to be capable of reflection, any reason at all drawn drawn from what it sees or feels, to conclude that it is a benevolent being who rules the universe? Has it not the strongest reasons in the world for thinking that he takes pleasure in tormenting the innocent? How many infants who never did any harm, have suffered the most violent torments from disease? How many have been burnt, stabbed, or dashed in pieces, by a race of monsters calling themselves men? How can Mr. Paine reconcile this with his ideas of moral justice? If I disbelieved the scripture, I am sure I could not—There cannot be the smallest pretence of immorality, or of a distribution of rewards and punishments according to merit in this case, for the infants never had offended, yet they were punished, while the most grievous offenders escaped unhurt!

THERE is besides, in this fair creation, something very like what is said of our saviour laying down his life for the sins of his people, and suffering death that they might live. I am sorry that Mr. Paine's absolute want of method in writing obliges me to anticipate him here, for it is not until his 83d paragraph that he tells us that moral justice cannot take the innocent for the guilty, even if the innocent would offer itself." But how often is the innocent taken for the guilty in this world? How many innocent sheep, calves, oxen, &c. have lost their lives to support those who were a pest to the face of the earth? Are we to say that God is morally *unjust* in this world, and *just* only in the next? Even this we cannot be allowed to say; for Mr. Paine tells us that the conveniences of this world indicate *future* blessings. Whether by *future* blessings he means blessings in the next world, or more of the same kind in this, I know not; but certain I am, that, supposing myself an unbeliever of the gospel, I have the very same reason to expect in the next world what I have met with in this. If I have led a life of misery in this world, I can expect nothing else in the next, because God is unchangeable.

THE difficulty in which Mr. Paine is now involved, cannot be removed but by accounting for the introduction of evil into the creation formed originally by a perfectly good and benevolent being, who has no pleasure in destroying, or giving pain to any of his creatures. The solution of this difficulty hath exercised the wits of mankind in all ages, and Mr. Paine, by attempting to keep it out of sight (for he takes not the least notice of it in any part of his work) indirectly owns that he cannot solve it. To me the solution is obvious, and depends on the following principles.

I. THE

1. THE Deity, having life in himself *essentially*, and being the author of it originally to all created beings, is to them, at all periods of their existence, the same fountain and source of life that he was at first.

2. WHATEVER intermediate beings may be used, as means for the support of any creature's life, still their dependence on God is ultimately as great as at first. The scripture therefore speaks true, when it tells us, that "life lies in God's favour;" and that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

3. GOD, having infinite power, hath also infinite wisdom, and happiness. As he is more powerful than any creature, so is he wiser than any creature, and more happy than any creature.

4. GOD acts always according to his wisdom, and his happiness arises from this mode of action.

5. THE wisdom of a creature being inferior, and of a different kind from that of God, it is impossible that it can act in a manner similar to the deity.

6. GOD is invisible to all created beings.

7. As God is invisible to created beings, he cannot be an object of their love; for we can love nothing which we cannot see. The visible creation hath numberless beauties which rivet our hearts to it, to the neglect of the Deity, because we cannot see him.

8. FROM this capacity in creatures to see one another, and their incapacity to see God; arises a perverse kind of wisdom, by which their love is directed to themselves, or to one another, and not to God. Hence they act in a manner totally dissimilar to the Deity; the consequence of which is pain, misery, and death, instead of life.

9. IF God gives a *law* to any creature, the keeping of that law must be for the good of the creature itself, and not to make any addition to the happiness of God; for this is impossible.

10. THE law of God always must be calculated to direct the wisdom of the creature in such a manner as to produce a similarity of action between God and the creature.

11. THIS similarity of action consists, when man is *solitary*, in putting an absolute confidence in God, and using the means of subsistence as merely subordinate creatures, entirely destitute of virtue, but what God gives them. When *in society*, the similarity is extended to doing justice, loving mercy, &c. not forgetting the former, that man does not live by bread alone, &c.

12. IF the creature *believes* the word of God, when he gives this law, it will act according to it; if not, it will act according to its own unassisted wisdom. In the former case it will live, in the latter, it will die. The scripture therefore speaks true, when it says, "The just shall live by his faith."

13. IT is not natural for creatures to believe the word of God, because

Because their senses continually direct them to other creatures, and not to God, as capable of giving life and happiness. This disposition is universal and incurable ; and therefore the scripture is true when it says " there is none that doeth good and sinneth not, *no not one*".

14. ACCORDING to the principles already laid down, if God creates beings of higher and lower orders, the former, seeing only their own perfections, and that all other creatures are inferior to them, will be intoxicated with their own beauties, they will put confidence in themselves and not in God; and, if they have any interference with inferior creatures, they will entice them to do the same ; and the latter will naturally yield to their temptations. The sin of the higher orders of creatures therefore will be *pride* ; of the lower orders *idolatry*. The scripture therefore again speaks true, when, mentioning the fall of the devil, it says, "Thine heart was lifted up in thee by reason of thy beauty;" and, speaking of the fall of man, it tells us, that he believed the word of the devil, that life might be had by the mere enjoyment of a creature, in opposition to what God had said.

15. THUS all creatures are, and must be, by nature, *essentially evil*. i. e. they have in their nature a principle, which draws them aside from God, and which, by its continual operation, makes them act in a way entirely unlike him. This principle is the inferior kind of wisdom we possess, arising from our present faculties of perception. These must therefore be destroyed, and others put in their room, before we can act in such a manner as to enjoy life. The way to true *life*, therefore, must, to every creature, lie through *death*.

THUS far I have thought proper to lay down, in as few words as I could, the scripture doctrine of the introduction of evil into this system, an event which did not happen from any determination or arbitrary purpose of the Deity ; nor from any permission, which could have been at pleasure withheld ; but was a necessary result of the difference between the Deity and his creatures. A difference which could not have been removed originally, unless a creature had been made equal to God ; which it is a contradiction to suppose ; or, after the creature had become subject to evil, by the Deity himself assuming its nature, and bestowing his faculties upon it. Both these positions are expressly set forth in scripture. Concerning the introduction of evil it is said, that "the creature was made subject to vanity, not *willingly*, but by reason of him that hath subjected the same in hope." This is the very thing that I have just said in other words ; and with respect to our being invested with the divine faculties, it is said, in as many words, that "we are made partakers of the divine nature." How this investiture takes place through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ must be considered when Mr. Paine thinks proper to investigate the *internal* evidence of these points. Let us therefore go on with his performance.

MR. PAINE.

41. "I know that this bold investigation will alarm many, but it would be paying too great a compliment to their credulity to forbear it upon that account: the times and the subject demand it to be done. The suspicion, that what is called the theory of the christian church is fabulous, is becoming very extensive in all countries; and it will be a consolation to men staggering under that suspicion, and doubting what to believe and what to disbelieve, to see the subject freely investigated. I therefore pass on to an examination of the books called the Old and New Testament."

REMARK.

IN this paragraph we have another instance of that ridiculous self-sufficiency so often displayed by our author. His pamphlet, it seems, is to make an alarm among mankind! I assure him, for one, that it hath not alarmed me; and I am convinced that every reader, who peruses with attention what I have said, will give me credit when I say that I am not alarmed. If a general disbelief of the scripture prevails, I am sorry for it, for the sake of these unbelievers themselves, not on any account of my own; for their disbelief cannot affect me. For those who doubt what to believe and disbelieve, Mr. Paine has set forth no object. He has indeed attempted to take from them the only solid ground of comfort which any man can have; and has put nothing in its place. He may investigate as much as he pleases, without any fear of disturbing my tranquillity; and therefore I am very willing to pass on with him to an examination of the Old and New Testament.

MR. PAINE,

42. "THESE books, beginning with Genesis, and ending with Revelations (which by the bye is a book of riddles that requires a revelation to explain it) are, we are told, the word of God. It is therefore proper for us to know who told us so, that we may know what credit to give to the report. The answer to this question is, that nobody can tell; excepting that we tell one another so. The case, however, historically appears to be as follows."

REMARK.

THIS, it seems, is the beginning of our investigation; and a wise one it certainly is. Abstracting from his sneer at the book of Revelation, it may be set forth in the following words. "Certain book, we are told are the word of God. Who told us so? Nobody! Most admirably investigated indeed! However it seems, we are to have the same investigation, or another as good, in an historical manner. Let us then hear it.

MR PAINE.

43. „WHEN the church mythologists established their system, they collected *all the writings* they could find, and managed them *as they pleased*. It is a matter altogether of uncertainty to us, whether such of the writings as now appear under the name of the Old and New Testament, are in the same state in which those collectors say they found them; or whether they added, altered, abridged, or dressed up.

REMARK.

HERE we have such a piece of nonsense as would tempt us to think the author *non compos*. What does he mean by saying that they collected *all the writings* they could find? Did they make a general collection of all the writings upon every subject that they could find? or what writings were they which were collected? where were they before, or what had dispersed them? These writings, thus collected, were managed as the collectors *pleased*. But how did they *please* to manage them? Mr Paine can give no answer. He does not even know whether they did any thing with them or not. His whole paragraph therefore is properly expressed by the following nonsensical sentence. "*Unknown writings were collected by unknown persons, by them managed in an unknown manner; and it is unknown to me whether they managed them in any manner or not.*"

MR. PAINE.

44. "BE this as it may, they decided by *vote*, which of the books, out of the collection they had made, should be the WORD OF GOD, and which should not. They rejected several; they voted others to be doubtful, such as the books called the Apocrypha; and those books which had a majority of votes, were voted to be the word of God. Had they voted otherwise, all the people, since calling themselves christians, had believed otherwise; for the belief of the one comes from the vote of the other. Who the people were that did all this, we know nothing of; they called themselves by the general name of the church; and this is all we know of the matter."

REMARK.

THIS paragraph proceeds in the same *unknown* style with the former, and is unworthy of more animadversion.

MR. PAINE.

45. "As we have no other external evidence or authority for believing these books to be the word of God, than what I have mentioned, which is no evidence or authority at all, I come, in the next,
place

place, to examine the internal evidence contained in the books themselves."

REMARK.

In the beginning of this paragraph our author ought to have told us whom he meant by the *we*. He should have said *we Deists*; for *we*, the *believers of the gospel*, have a good evidence even of the *external* kind. Before I proceed, therefore, with Mr. Paine, to consider the *internal* evidence which the books themselves afford, I shall recount some particulars of the former. With regard to the books of the Old Testament then, the evidence of their antiquity, and that they formerly *were* called the word of God, rests with the Jews. They have in all ages appealed to them as the foundation of their religion. The Jews existed before there was any christian church; for we find them mentioned by ancient authors. They were visited by Alexander the Great, who saw the same prophecy of Daniel that we have now. Daniel himself lived in the time of Cyrus, and before it, at the very commencement of profane history. Before that we must have recourse to the books called the word of God themselves, or be in total ignorance upon this subject; for we have no other source of intelligence. The books of the Old Testament therefore have been *called* the word of God by the Jews ever since the commencement of profane history, and before it. Now, with regard to the New Testament, we find the christians mentioned in history under the reign of Nero, who persecuted them; and the New Testament itself tells us that Christ was born in the time of Augustus. The first christians professed their belief in the same saviour that we do; they called him the son of God, and believed him to be a divine person. The books of the New Testament are mentioned by those called the *Fathers*, and were supposed, by the earliest of those writers, to be the word of God. From the early date of some of those writings, it is probable that the New Testament was all written within 100 years after our Saviour was born; and this we know must have been the case if the books were written by those who attended Christ in his life time. Of the sacred books therefore we have as much historical evidence as the nature of the thing will admit of; and there is no reason at all to suppose that they contain any thing now, that they did not contain in the earliest ages. Now, for the internal evidence.

MR. PAINE.

46. "IN the former part of this essay, I have spoken of revelation. I now proceed with that subject, for the purpose of applying it to the books in question."

47. "REVELATION is a communication of something, which the person, to whom that is revealed, did not know before. For if I have done a thing, or seen it done, it needs no revelation to tell

tell me I have done it, or seen it, nor to enable me to tell it or to write it."

REMARK.

THIS is the definition we formerly had of revelation, only altered for the worse. Formerly it was a communication from God to man;—now it seems it is *any* communication to man, whether God be the author of it or not. The last part of the paragraph is superfluous and stupid to the last degree. We all know that we need not be told of what we know already, and Mr. Paine might have saved himself the trouble of writing it.

MR. PAINE.

43. "REVELATION, therefore, cannot be applied to any thing done upon earth, of which man is himself the actor or the witness; and consequently all the historical and anecdotal part of the Bible, which is almost the whole of it, is not within the meaning and compass of the word revelation, and therefore is not the word of God."

REMARK.

THERE are in this pamphlet a number of sentences so exquisitely absurd, and so totally unlike the work of a rational being, that I am entirely at a loss to account for their appearance. Nothing can be more absurd than our author's assertion in this paragraph, that man cannot be an actor in revelation, or a witness of it. If God does any thing upon earth, and, man sees that done, is he not as capable of being a witness of this as of any thing else? For instance when the disciples of Jesus Christ saw him touch a lame, blind, or deaf man, and that person instantaneously restored to the use of his faculties, were they not as competent witnesses of that fact as any other? Again, if God inspires any man with a knowledge of something which man could not have known by his own natural faculties, and then orders him to go and tell it to the rest, is not this man an actor in the revelation, as well as a witness of it?

MR. PAINE.

49. "WHEN Sampson ran off with the gates of Gaza, if ever he did so (and whether he did or not is nothing to us) or when he visited his Delilah, or caught his foxes, or did any thing else, what has revelation to do with these things? If they were facts he could tell them himself; or his secretary, if he kept one, could write them; if they were worth either telling or writing, and if they were notions, revelation could not make them true; and whether true or not, we are neither the wiser nor the better for knowing them.—

When

When we contemplate the immensity of that Being who directs and governs the incomprehensible WHOLE ; of which the utmost ken of human sight can discover but a part, we ought to feel shame at calling such paltry stories the word of God."

REMARK.

THIS paragraph is so very unlike Mr. Paine's other works, that I am much inclined to doubt his being the author of the pamphlet. The work is indeed so weak, so silly, and so uncandid, that I cannot help thinking it rather a piece vamped up by the London booksellers, and imposed upon the world as a work of Mr. Paine. But, be this as it will, Mr. Paine, or the author who personates him, ought to have considered Sampson as a patriot, divinely raised up, and endowed with supernatural strength, to show the silly and mean spirited Israelites what a shame it was for them to be in subjection to tyrants, and how easily their God could deliver them, and certainly would do so, if they would return to him, and exert themselves. But, I forbear to enlarge upon this subject, for obvious reasons.

MR. PAINE.

50. "As to the account of the creation, with which the book of Genesis opens, it has all the appearance of being a tradition which the Israelites had among them before they came into Egypt ; and, after their departure from that country, they put it at the head of their history ; without telling, as it is most probable they did not know, how they came by it. The manner in which the account opens, shows it to be traditionary. It begins abruptly. It is nobody that speaks. It is nobody that hears. It is addressed to nobody. It has neither first, second nor third person. It has every criterion of being a tradition. It has no voucher. Moses does not take it upon himself by introducing it with the formality that he does on other occasions, such as that of saying, "*The Lord spake unto Moses saying.*"

REMARK.

NOW our author has recourse again to his *unknown* work. The Israelites did not *know* where they had their account of the creation. What a pity, that Mr. Paine was not there to tell them that it was a tradition ! But they put it at the *head* of their history. Where would this intolerable author have had them to put it ? The account of the creation places itself naturally at the head of *all* histories ; or would Mr. Paine have them to begin at the present time, and write backward to the creation ? *Nobody*, I perceive is also a very active personage with Mr. Paine. *Nobody*, according to him, collected the scriptural writings ; *nobody* abridged or altered them ; *nobody* voted them to be the word of God. *Nobody*
spake

spoke the account of the creation; *nobody* heard it; and yet, it seems, *somebody* has put it in print. Thus far Mr. Paine only speaks nonsense; but when he says "it has no *voucher*," he tells a falsehood. It has *two* vouchers. One is God himself who spoke it; the other the creation itself as it now stands. This I have already shown, that the idea of the world being created could not have entered the human mind. There could not be a man to witness the fact; and all the accounts that have been fabricated by man have this monstrous defect, that they make the world construct itself. The account therefore is *one* voucher of its own truth; the existence of the thing created is *another* voucher. Thus, the written or printed account we have that God said "Let there be light, and there was light," is one voucher; the light which we see is another. Had the world continued in darkness, indeed we might have said that a voucher was wanted.

MR. PAINE.

51. "WHY it has been called the Mosaic account of creation, I am at a loss to conceive. Moses, I believe, was too good a judge of such subjects, to put his name to that account. He had been educated among the Egyptians, who were a people as well skilled in science, particularly astronomy, as any people of their day; and the silence and caution that Moses observes, in not authenticating the account, is a good negative evidence, that he neither told it, nor believed it. The case is, that every nation of people has been world-makers, and the Israelites had as much right to set up the trade of world making as any of the rest; and, as Moses was not an Israelite, he might not chuse to contradict the tradition. The account, however, is harmless; and this is more than can be said for many other parts of the bible."

REMARK.

IN this paragraph we have one of those *marvellous* sentences, which so strongly characterise Mr. Paine's pamphlet. Moses, he says, was too good a judge of such subjects to put his name to the scripture account of the creation. What subjects does he mean? Is any man upon earth a judge of the creation of worlds? The Egyptians were skilled in astronomy, our author tells us, and Moses was educated among them. I believe him; but did this enable either him or them to create the world, or to know how it was done? The wretched and pitiful productions of Mr. Whiston, the Count de Buffon, Dr. Hutton of Edinburgh, and others who pretend to give theories of the earth, as they are called, are an evident proof of the incapacity of man to investigate the subject of creation. All of these pretended Philosophers have fallen into the error of the ancient heathens, viz. that of saying that the world *made itself*. They tell

us

us, that it was formed by the powers which now exist in it, gravity, attraction and repulsion, &c. But will such people say, that, by laying down the wheels of a clock or watch in disorder, these powers ever did, or *could* put them in a proper order? Yet, no sooner are they properly adjusted to one another, than the very powers of gravity, elasticity, &c. which could do nothing before, keep the machine in motion. If then these powers cannot even put in proper order the wheel of a common machine, when once disordered, how can any man suppose that they would be able to put in proper order the materials of the whole world, when in confusion? The Scripture account of the creation is plain and simple. It tells us that *God* made the world; but, as to the manner in which it was made, it is absolutely silent. Indeed it is evident that *how* the world *was* made must remain for ever as great a secret as *how* it is made. Were we to pore and study from the day of our birth to that of our death we could not comprehend the manner in which a hair of our head exists at present. How then can any man pretend to know the manner in which all things were made originally?

It is not true that Moses refused to authenticate the Scripture account of the creation. He did authenticate it remarkably when he brought the two tables of the commandments from the mount. In the fourth of these commandments it is said, "For, in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is," &c. If Moses therefore enjoined the belief of this account of the creation to his people, and if it was written on stone by God himself, what more authenticity can any thing have?

It is not true that the Israelites set up to be *world-makers*; they said that *God* made the world. The ancient and modern *heathens*, indeed, who knew not the power of God, have invented systems of world-making, each of them more absurd than those that went before it. In what manner Mr. Paine has found out that Moses was *not* an Israelite, I know not. Surely this wants a voucher as much as the account of the creation.

MR. PAINE.

52. "WHENEVER we read the obscene stories, the voluptuous debaucheries, the cruel and torturous executions, the unrelenting vindictiveness, with which more than half the Bible is filled, it would be more consistent that we called it the word of a demon, than the word of God. It is a history of wickedness that has served to corrupt and brutalize mankind; and, for my own part I sincerely detest it, as I detest every thing that is cruel."

REMARK.

ON this paragraph I shall only observe, that Mr. Paine, now destitute of argument, is obliged to have recourse to that silly method commonly in use, of railing against his adversaries, and calling them

names

names. What care I, or what cares any person who believes the Bible, whether Mr. Paine detests it or not? We know he detests it, or he would not have written against it. When he says that it tends to corrupt mankind, we know that he speaks a falsehood; because it corrects vice and corruption in ourselves. If it gives an history of mankind, that must in part be an history of vices, because nothing but vice is to be found among them.

MR. PAINE.

53. "WE scarcely meet with any thing, a few phrases excepted, but what deserves either our abhorrence or our contempt, till we come to the miscellaneous parts of the Bible. In the anonymous publications, the Psalms, and the book of Job, more particularly in the latter, we find a great deal of elevated sentiment reverentially spoken of the power and benignity of the Almighty; but they stand in no higher rank than many other compositions on similar subjects, as well before that time as since.

REMARK.

It is painful to answer *billingsgate* and *nonsense* when so often repeated. If the Bible is so disgusting and contemptible, Mr. Paine ought to have pointed out *one* of those disgusting passages at least. In *some* parts of the Bible he owns that the power and benignity of the Deity is reverentially spoken of. I say that it speaks reverentially of the Deity in *all* places. But even here our author cannot express his sentiments without nonsense. The book of Job, it seems, is not superior to many other compositions on *similar* subjects. What subjects does he know *similar* to the power and benignity of the Almighty? I know of none; nor can there be any, because there is none like God. These compositions it seems were *before* the time of Job as well as since. Does Mr. Paine know when Job lived? If he does he should have told us, as well as produced some of the compositions. I have heard that Job was cotemporary with Moses, or even before him. What compositions, written *before* this time, may be in Mr. Paine's possession, I cannot imagine.

MR. PAINE,

54. "THE proverbs, which are said to be Solomon's, tho' most probably a collection, (because they discover a knowledge of life, which his situation excluded him from knowing, are an instructive table of Ethics. They are inferior in keenness to the proverbs of the Spaniards, and not more wise and economical than those of the American Franklin."

REMARK.

WHATEVER access Solomon had to know life, he does not pretend, nor do his historians pretend, that he derived his knowledge,

as men commonly do, from their own experience, but from God; who knows every thing relating to life. I know not those proverbs of the Spaniards set up by our author in opposition to the proverbs of Solomon; nor am I acquainted with those of Franklin. Solomon has said more than I practise, so that I have no occasion to go farther. But, with respect both to the Spaniards and to Franklin, it is plain that they might derive benefit from Solomon's works, but he could derive none from theirs; In point of merit therefore they must fall short of him even though their works were equal; which, however, I do not believe.

MR. PAINÉ.

55. "ALL the remaining parts of the Bible, generally known by the name of the prophets; are the works of the Jewish poets, and itinerant preachers, who mixed poetry, anecdote, and devotion together; and those works still retain the air and style of poetry, though in translation.

56. "THERE is not throughout the whole book, called the Bible, any word that describes to us what we call a poet, nor any word that describes what we call poetry. The case is, that the word *prophet*, to which latter times have affixed a new idea, was the Bible word for poet; and the word *propheying* meant the art of making poetry. It also means the art of *playing poetry* to a tune, upon any instrument of music.

57. "WE read of the propheying with pipes, tabrets, and horns. Of propheying with harps, psalteries, with cymbals; and with every other instrument of music then in fashion. Were we now to speak of propheying with a fiddle, or with a pipe and tabor, the expression would have no meaning, or would appear ridiculous, and to some people contemptible, because we have changed the meaning of the word.

REMARK.

I HAVE transcribed these three paragraphs in conjunction, because each of them contains part of the same subject, and they ought not to be separated. Our author's idea of *propheying* being the same with the art of *making poetry*, is entirely new to me; but when he talks of *playing poetry* to a tune, I must confess, he goes beyond my understanding. I can indeed conceive how people could ~~roar~~ poetry through a speaking trumpet, or perhaps through a horn*; but how a fiddler or flute player could make it out upon *his instrument*, it remains with our author to explain. On these paragraphs

* See the trial of HURDY GURDY; where we have an instance of a French Horn giving evidence, for the Crown, in poetry

paragraphs there are some notes, containing specimens of Mr. Paine's poetry or *prophecies*; but I forbear to transcribe them, lest the reader should think that he *prophefied by an evil spirit*; for he certainly performs his part very badly.

MR. PAINE.

58. "WE are told of Saul being among the *prophets*, and also that he *prophefied*; but we are not told what *they prophefied*, nor what he *prophefied*. The case is, there was nothing to tell; for these prophets were a company of musicians and poets; and Saul joined in the concert; and this was called *prophefying*."

REMARK.

MR. PAINE has dressed up his story so well, that were it not for a small *contradiction*, one would think that he had been actually present, and seen the whole. The contradiction is, that, though both Saul and the prophets *prophefied*, yet there was *nothing to tell*. Surely if they made any poetry, the poetry could have been told. If, like some of Mr. Paine's prophecies, it had no meaning, or was played upon a fiddle, yet it had *words*, or the instrument had *notes* which produced either harmony or discord; and we might at least have been told the name of the tunes they played!

MR. PAINE.

59. "THE account given of this affair in the book called Samuel is, that Saul met a *company* of prophets; a whole company of them: coming down with a psaltery, a tabret, a pipe and a harp, and that they *prophefied*, and that he *prophefied* with them. But it appears afterwards, that Saul *prophefied* badly; that is, he performed his part badly; for it is said, that "an evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he *prophefied*."

REMARK.

It would seem impossible for this author to write without either nonsense or misrepresentation. The passage, to which he alludes, is in the 10th chapter of I. Samuel, and runs thus. "After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines; and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place, with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe and a harp before them, and they shall *prophefy*: and the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt *prophefy* with them, and shalt be turned into another man." Now from this passage it is most evident, that the *prophets* themselves had neither psaltery, tabret, pipe nor harp. They went with a band of
music

music before them, as our soldiers do; and it appears that the music carried before the prophets had the same effect upon them in their way, that the military music has, or is designed to have, upon the soldiers in theirs. The military music raises the spirits, and calls forth the martial ardour of those who hear it. So did the music, carried before the prophets, excite within them the divine fervour which brought on the power of prophesying. Of this we have an example in the case of Elisha, who being asked by Jehoram concerning the fate of himself, Jehoshaphat, and the king of Edom, made the following reply, "As the Lord of hosts liveth before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee nor see thee. But now, bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, while the minstrel played, the hand of the Lord came up on him." Thus we see what was the use of *music* to the ancient prophets; but now let us see whether Elisha, when inspired by the spirit of prophecy, made poetry without any meaning, or whether, in plain prose, he told them what they were to do, and what was to happen. The prophecy then is as follows. "Thus saith the Lord, make this valley full of ditches; for, thus saith the Lord, ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye and your cattle, and your beasts. And this is but a light thing in the sight of the Lord: He will deliver the Moabites also into your hand. And ye shall finite every fenced city, and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and stop all wells of water, and mar every good piece of land with stones." The accomplishment of this prophecy is related in the following words. "And it came to pass, in the morning, when the meat offering was offered, that behold there came water by the way of Edom, and the whole country was filled with water," &c. It is most evident therefore, that the office of the prophets was not to compose unmeaning poetry, but to declare some of the purposes of God, which, without them, could not have been known until they were accomplished.

On this paragraph our author has the following note. "As those men, who call themselves divines and commentators, are very fond of puzzling one another, I leave them to contest the meaning of the first part of the phrase, an "*evil spirit of God*" I keep to my text. I keep to the meaning of the word prophecy." Though neither *divine* nor *commentator*, I shall easily set aside this difficulty if any there be in the case. It is explained in the following words of the 8th Psalm. "With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward." The operation of the Spirit of God upon the mind of man produces what we call *conscience*. Every one knows the difference between a good and evil conscience; that the former gives happiness, the latter

latter torment. Both proceed from the same God; the former is a *good*, and the latter an *evil* spirit from him. When Saul obeyed the commands of God, he was made happy by the spirit of prophecy, and no doubt prophesied concerning the blessings which God would bestow upon his people. When he disobeyed the divine commands, and was rejected from the kingdom, then the divine spirit left him, his conscience became an *evil spirit* from God; but still continued to suggest prophecies to him, probably of the dismal and destructive kind; and in short the case seems to have been, that he was seized with temporary fits of madness; in which he would predict mischief and misery to himself, or perhaps to the whole Jewish nation; which it is not wonderful that a madman should do.

MR. PAINE.

"Now, were there no other passage in the book, called the Bible, than this, to demonstrate to us that we have lost the original meaning of the word *prophecy*, and substituted another meaning in its place, this alone would be sufficient; for it is impossible to use and apply the word *prophecy* in the place it is here used and applied, if we give it the sense which latter times have affixed to it. The manner in which it is here used strips it of all religious meaning, and shows that a man might then be a *prophet*, or might *prophecy*, as he may now be a poet, or a musician, without any regard to the morality or immorality of his character. The word was originally a term of science, promiscuously applied to poetry and to music, and not restricted to any subject upon which poetry and music might be exercised."

REMARK.

THE example I have already brought of Elisha is sufficient to show that *Mr. Paine*, and not *we*, have mistaken the meaning of the word *prophecy*. I shall therefore only take notice of an *afterthought* which our author has introduced respecting prophets; as if their inspiration had been connected with their moral character. The scripture plainly tells us it was not; for, says our Saviour. "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord! have we not *prophefied* in thy name," yet he will command them to depart as *workers of iniquity*. It is a most shocking piece of impudence in *Mr. Paine* to pretend to tell us what is the *original* meaning of any word, when he afterwards owns that he has not even the common learning of a school boy; that he does not understand Latin; nay, when he inveighs against the study of the dead languages, as if it were a crime not to be as ignorant as himself!

MR. PAINE.

MR. "DEBORAH and Barak are called prophets, not because the

they predicted any thing, but because they composed the poem or song which bears their name, in celebration of an act already done: David is ranked among the prophets, for he was a musician; and was also reported (though perhaps very erroneously) to be the author of the Psalms. But Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are not called prophets. It does not appear from any accounts we have, that they could either sing, play music, or make poetry."

REMARK

I MUST here repeat what I formerly expressed concerning Mr. Paine's work. It is disagreeable to answer the writings of an author who has neither knowledge nor candour. If he would write against the Bible, why does he not make himself acquainted with it, and not pester us with his nonsensical mistakes? Deborah did predict something when she said to Barak "the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hands of a woman," and so did they mutually in their song when they said "Blessed shall be Jael," &c. David, it seems, was a prophet, because he was a musician. How comes Mr. Paine to know this, or that he was not the author of the Psalms? I am surprised that he does not at once ascribe them, as well as all the books in scripture to his great author *nobody*; for if, like the writers of plays, Mr. Paine had made a *Dramatis Personæ* at the beginning of his performance, we should certainly have found *nobody*, *nothing*, and *we know not what, how, when, who or where*! to have been principal characters in the piece. It is not true that Abraham was not called a prophet. God himself called him a prophet, when he said to Abimelech "Restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet," &c. and this he does without saying whether he could play on an instrument or not. If Isaac and Jacob are not called prophets, they certainly *were so*; for they foretold things to come, in blessing their children."

MR. PAINE.

62. "We are told of the greater and lesser prophets: They might as well tell us of the greater and lesser God; for there cannot be degrees in prophesying consistently with its modern sense.—But there are degrees in poetry, and therefore the phrase is reconcilable to the case, when we understand by it the greater and the lesser poets."

REMARK.

If God reveals *many* things to a person, that person is a *great* prophet; if *few*, he is a lesser one. Thus the Jews when they beheld the numberless miracles done by our Saviour, called him a *great* prophet.

Mr.

MR. PAINE.

63. "It is altogether unnecessary, after this, to offer any observations upon what those men, styled prophets, have written.—The axe goes at once to the root, by showing that the original meaning of the word has been mistaken, and consequently all the inferences that have been drawn from those books, the devotional respect that has been paid to them, and the laboured commentaries that have been written upon them, under that mistaken meaning, are not worth disputing about. In many things, however, the writings of the Jewish poets deserve a better fate than that of being bound up, as they now are, with the trash that accompanies them, under the name of the word of God."

REMARK.

ON this paragraph I need make no comment. The self-sufficiency and folly displayed in it, are of themselves sufficient censure.

MR. PAINE.

64. "If we permit ourselves to conceive right ideas of things, we must necessarily affix the idea not only of unchangeableness, but of the utter impossibility of any change taking place, by any means, or accident whatever, in that which we would honour with the name of the word of God; and therefore the word of God cannot exist in any written or human language."

REMARK.

THE argument here is below the understanding of a child.—Though human language were more chargeable than it is, would it be in the smallest degree difficult for God to preserve his word unchangeable from first to last? Or if he *once* gave a word to man is it not a contradiction to suppose, that he would *ever* allow it to be obliterated, or changed, as long as the human race exist.

MR. PAINE.

65. "The continually progressive change to which the meaning of words is subject, the want of universal language which renders translations necessary, the errors to which translations are again subject, the mistakes of copyists and printers, together with the possibility of wilful alteration, are of themselves evidences, that human language, whether in speech or print, cannot be the word of God. The word of God exists in something else."

REMARK.

THIS is a repetition of the former argument, and I have no occasion to give any farther answer to it; but as our author complains

plaints of the want of an universal language, we must observe, that the Creator of the world seems to have anticipated this objection, and to have removed it, when, by the gift of the Holy Ghost, the Apostles were enabled to speak any language; and no doubt they would translate the sacred books into different languages, and disperse them throughout the world. It is surprising that Mr. Paine should own the existence of a God at all, and yet suppose him to be so silly, so weak, or so careless, that he would not, or could not preserve among mankind the necessary knowledge of himself, whether delivered by word or writing? If he is the supreme governor of all the world, is he not also the governor of human actions? If he has set bounds to the waves of the sea, has he not also set bounds to the ignorance, the folly, and the malevolence of man; and will any one of these, or all of them together, be able to corrupt what God means to preserve pure?

MR. PAINE.

66. "DID the book called the Bible, excel, in purity of ideas and expression, all the books that are now extant in the world, I would not take it for the rule of my faith, as being the word of God; because the possibility would nevertheless exist of my being imposed upon. But, when I see throughout the greatest part of this book, scarcely any thing but an history of the grossest vices, and a collection of the most paltry and contemptible tales, I cannot dishonour my Creator by calling it by his name."

REMARK.

WHAT argument this paragraph contains is only a repetition of the former, and has been already answered. In answer to the language in the latter part of it I shall only ask, If the Bible is an history of gross vices, and a collection of paltry and contemptible tales, why is Mr. Paine, a man of abilities and understanding, at such pains to write against it? Nobody thinks of answering the *New Atalantis*, *Satan's invisible world*, *Jack the Giant-killer*, or *Tom Thumb*. Indeed there cannot be a greater evidence of the divinity of the Bible, than the many attacks that have been made upon it, and the many answers that have been made to these attacks. The former show that it cannot be overthrown; the latter, that it needs no defence: for, as the adversaries of the Bible have never been able to eradicate it from the world, so its defenders have not been able to establish it on a surer basis than before.

MR. PAINE.

67. "THEUS much for the Bible. I now go on to the book called the New Testament. The *New Testament*! that is, the *new will*, as if there could be two wills of the Creator."

REMARK.

REMARK.

THIS objection against the New Testament would hold equally good against the existence of another world, which Mr. Paine pretends to believe; for putting man first into one state of existence, and then into another, manifests two wills in the Creator as much as the change of the Old Testament dispensation for the New.

MR. PAINE.

68. "HAD it been the object, or the intention of Jesus Christ to establish a new religion, he would undoubtedly have written the system himself, or *procured it to be written* in his life-time. But there is no publication extant authenticated with his name. All the books called the New Testament, were written after his death. He was a Jew by birth and profession; and he was the Son of God in the same manner that every other person is; for the Creator is the father of all."

REMARK.

IT never was the intention of Jesus Christ to establish a new religion. He came to give no new law but to fulfil the old one, as he himself tells us. I cannot imagine what our author means by his *authentications*. When a book appears with any person's name to it, he denies that person to be the author; and when it wants a name he complains of that also. With regard to Jesus Christ, however, the reason why he wrote nothing concerning himself is evident from his own words; for he tells us that "if he bears witness of himself his witness is *not true*." As to his being the Son of God like other men, Mr. Paine says so; but Jesus himself never said any such thing. He says, that he had power to lay down his life, and to take it again; which shows that he looked upon himself to be the Son of God *not* as other men.

MR. PAINE.

69. "THE first four books, called Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, do not give a history of the life of Jesus Christ, but only detached anecdotes of him. It appears from these books, that the whole time of his being a preacher was not more than eighteen months, and it was only during this short time that those men became acquainted with him. They make mention of him, at the age of twelve years, sitting, they say, among the Jewish doctors, and answering them questions. As this was several years before their acquaintance with him begun, it is most probable they had this anecdote from his parents. From this time there is no account of him for about sixteen years. Where he lived, or how he employed himself during this interval, is not known. Most probably he was working at his father's trade, which was that of a carpenter.

It does not appear that he had any school education, and the probability is that he could not write, for his parents were extremely poor, as appears from their not being able to pay for a bed when he was born."

REMARK.

WITH regard to the life of Jesus Christ being anecdotal, John tells us that it was impossible to enumerate his actions; at the same time he tells us the reason of his life being written in part; namely, that his disciples might believe, and that, believing they might have life through his name. What is written of him then being sufficient for this purpose, Mr. Paine has no right to require more. Indeed, to what purpose would he have more, when he disbelieves what is already written? From a perusal of the four books in question, and comparing them with the prophecy of Daniel, I am of opinion that Christ continued to preach three years and a half; but whatever space of time he lived, it was long enough to accomplish his purposes. As to his school-education, he certainly had none; though it does not from thence follow that he was ignorant. The Jews knew that he had got no school education; but they also asked "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned." That he *could* write we certainly know also, because we are told that he *did* write; and considering the character which he assumed to himself, it is absurd to deny him the power of doing any thing.

MR. PAINE.

70. "It is somewhat curious, that the three persons, whose names are the most universally recorded, were of very obscure parentage. Moses was a foundling, Jesus Christ was born in a stable, and Mahomet was a mule-driver. The first and the last of these men were founders of different systems of religion; but Jesus Christ founded no new system. He called men to the practice of moral virtues, and to the belief of one God. The great trait in his character is philanthropy."

REMARK.

TO the three remarkable persons mentioned in this paragraph, Mr. Paine might have added himself as a fourth. He too seems to wish to found a system of religion; and, like the rest, his birth has not been among the higher classes of mankind; nay I am of opinion, that it is more obscure than any of the other three. It is true he tells us that his father was a Quaker; but this is evidently *hearsay*, and we ought not to believe a point of such importance upon this slender evidence. The difficulty will be equally great if we fix upon any other individual of the human race; and therefore, hope, that in the next edition of his pamphlet our author will

ascribe the origin of Mahomet and himself to his friend *nobody*; leaving the parentage of Jesus Christ and Moses in their former obscurity. With respect to the doctrine he preached, Jesus Christ did not more call men to believe in God than in himself. Out of the many instances of this that might be brought, I shall quote only one; where he says to his disciples, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me."

MR. PAINE.

71. "THE manner in which he was apprehended, shows that he was not much known at that time; and it shows also that the meetings he then held with his followers were in secret; and that he had given over, or suspended, preaching publicly. Judas could no otherwise betray him, than by giving information where he was, and pointing him out to the officers that went to to arrest him; and the reason for employing and paying Judas to do this, could arise only from the causes already mentioned, that of his not being much known, and living concealed.

72. "THE idea of his concealment not only agrees very ill with his reputed divinity, but associates with it something of pusillanimity; and his being betrayed, or in other words, his being apprehended on the information of one of his followers, shows that he did not intend to be apprehended, and consequently, that he did not intend to be crucified."

REMARK.

THIS complaint, that Jesus Christ kept himself too much concealed, was by no means invented by Mr. Paine. It was made by our Saviour's relations, who desired him to show himself openly to the world. The reason of his reserved behaviour was that he sought not his own honour, but that of him who sent him; *i. e.* God. That he was not well known in Jerusalem is most certainly false; for when he came, for the last time, into that city, it is said that the whole of it was moved; and the rulers of the Jews were thrown into despair, for they said the world was gone after him. At last not only the Jews, but the Greeks also heard of his fame, and some of the latter desired to see Jesus. He instantly took this as a signal for him to leave the world, as is evident from his answer. "The hour is come, says he, that the son of man should be glorified," &c. and immediately after spoke of his approaching death, both to his disciples and the people at large. He told his disciples that one of them should betray him, and he had, before this time, mentioned in general that he should be betrayed. When Judas came with a band of ruffians to take him, he showed no signs of pusillanimity; on the contrary he resolutely told them he was the person they wanted. The moment he spoke this they were

were deprived of all power to execute their purpose, they went backward, and fell to the ground. Undismayed, however, by this check, they again advanced, and he gave them the same answer as before, but, without showing his power over them any more, he suffered them quietly to apprehend him. Still he showed no mark of pusillanimity. He did not condescend to ask his life, or to attempt to run away from them. The only stipulation he made was, that if they wanted him, they should let his disciples go away. When he appeared both before Herod and Pilate, nothing could be more resolute than his behaviour; and nothing can be more false than Mr. Paine's charge.

MR. PAINE.

73. "THE christian mythologists tell us, that Christ died for the sins of the world, and that he came on *purpose to die*. Would it not then have been the same if he had died of a fever, or of the small pox, of old age, or of any thing else?"

REMARK.

I KNOW not who the mythologists are who have told Mr. Paine that Christ came on *purpose to die*. In the scripture writings I find that he died *for a certain purpose*; viz. "that he might bring us to God." I have already shown how we naturally were, and must be at a distance from God; and it was only by the death of Jesus Christ that we could be brought near him. It was impossible that Christ could die of a fever, of the small-pox, of old age, or any natural death. This would have been the death of a *sinner*; for *natural* death is a consequence of Adam's transgression. Had there been no other mode of death but this, our Saviour never could have died; but as God pronounced sentence of death upon the wicked by natural means, so did the devil pronounce sentence of death upon the righteous, by taking away their life by unnatural or violent means. In this manner therefore Jesus Christ died. His death was occasioned not by the sentence against Adam, but by his being given up to that evil power, which, since the fall of Adam, had usurped the dominion of this world.

MR. PAINE.

74. "THE declaratory sentence which, they say, was passed upon Adam in case he eat of the apple, was not that *thou shalt surely be crucified*, but *thou shalt surely die*. The sentence was death, and not the manner of dying. Crucifixion therefore, or any other particular mode of dying, made no part of the sentence that Adam was to suffer, and consequently, even upon their own tactic, it could make no part of the sentence that Christ was to suffer in the room of Adam. A fever would have done as well as a Cross, if there was any occasion for either."

REMARK.

REMARK.

THE answer given to the former paragraph is likewise sufficient for this. It is very true that Christ did not suffer in consequence of Adam's transgression, and I need not say that *I have shown* it, for it is evident of itself. Nevertheless it is most certain, that, if he suffered at all, it must have been for the sins of others; for he had none of his own.

MR. PAINE.

75. "THE sentence of death which, they tell us, was thus passed upon Adam, must either have meant dying naturally, that is, ceasing to live, or have meant what these mythologists call damnation; and consequently the act of dying on the part of Jesus Christ, must, according to their system, apply as a prevention to one or other of these two *things* happening to Adam, and to us.

76 "THAT it does not prevent our dying is evident, because we all die; and, if their accounts of longevity be true, men die faster since the crucifixion than before: and, with respect to the second explanation (including with it the *natural death* of Jesus Christ as a substitute for the *eternal death* or *damnation* of all mankind) it is impertinently revoking the sentence by a pun or a quibble upon the word *death*. That manufacturer of quibbles, St. Paul, if he wrote the books that bear his name, has helped this quibble on, by making another quibble on the word *Adam*. He makes there to be two Adams; the one who sins in fact, and suffers by proxy; the other who sins by proxy, and suffers in fact. A religion thus interlarded with quibble, subterfuge and pun, has a tendency to instruct its professors in the practice of these arts.—They acquire the habit, without being aware of the cause."

REMARK.

IN answer to all this, I must observe, that if Mr. Paine, or any body else, wishes to know the sentence passed upon Adam, they must take the words of scripture as they literally stand, without comment or addition. The sentence then was, that Man should live a life of labour and sorrow, until he returned to the dust from whence he was taken; "for," says the Almighty, "dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." This was the entire loss of the natural life; and, as for the spiritual life, which lies in a sense of God's favour, he lost it the moment he ate of the forbidden fruit. That he did so is evident by the terror which seized him when he heard the voice of God in the garden. The natural death was a consequence of the spiritual death, which consists in a sense of the divine displeasure, and which has often been known to exist in

a most tremendous degree, while the natural life continued; inso-
much that people in this condition have killed themselves, to put
an end to the torments they felt in their own mind. As Adam had
lost the spiritual life before he had any children, it is plain that
he could transmit none of it to any of his posterity; and therefore
all of them are born only with the natural life, which, without
the other, is continually liable to be destroyed. Being born in a
state of death therefore, we scarce know what true life is, and
think nothing of it; but, the moment we have any apprehension of
being summoned into the presence of the Deity, we feel the want
of it, and are afraid as Adam was. Thus we see that spiritual
death, or what is otherwise called *damnation*, may exist while
people are still alive upon this earth; and I hope it is no contra-
diction to say that the reverse of this proposition is true, viz. that
as spiritual death may exist while the natural life remains, so may
the spiritual life exist, when the natural life is taken away. But
the question is, after this spiritual life is lost, how can it be resto-
red? Before this can be answered, we must consider how it was
lost, and this easily appears from the nature of the creature itself.
Its faculties are not able to give it a view of the creator; therefore
it cannot love him, and of consequence acts contrary to him. The
remedy is, that a divine person should assume the nature of the
creature, and by living in that nature the life of God, should ma-
nifest the Deity in such a manner that the creatures might love
him in preference to this world. This was done by Jesus Christ.
Being naturally possessed of the spiritual life, he acted in a manner
directly contray to us who are in want of it. Instead of attempt-
ing to fly or hide himself from God, he constantly desired to be
with him. By the miracles that he worked, he manifested that God
was superior to this world; and consequently that nothing could
secure the human race from his power. These miracles were con-
stantly performed for the *good* of mankind, and upon the evil and
the good part of society promiscuously, by which it was manifest-
ed that God was the forgiver of sin. Thus were the properties of
the Deity made manifest to man, and they were thus led back to
him as their friend, instead of running away from him as their
enemy. To do this was the business of his whole life; but still
the great difficulty remained: those whom he came to convert,
were under sentence of natural death, and this sentence could not
be reversed; indeed great numbers of them were in the state of
the dead already. Jesus Christ never said that he came to *prevent*
death of this kind, indeed it would have been ridiculous (though
such things are nothing to Mr. Paine) to have said that he would
prevent what had already happened. Instead of this the scripture
tells us, that by his own death he *overcame* death; that is, he re-
sued from death those over whom it had the power either at that

time

time, or was to have in any time coming. To do this it was absolutely necessary that he should enter into the same state; for, unless he did this, he was not properly a man, but God in the shape of man. But it appears that the spiritual life must be lost before natural death can ensue. From the Saviour of mankind therefore the protection and vital influx derived from God the Father, and by which he had hitherto been supported, was taken away; and thus, according to the scripture expressions, he was cut off, he became sin, or a curse, was made a sacrifice, &c. Thus was he precisely reduced to the state in which we naturally are, and of which we make so little account. To him, however, it was so intolerable, that it threw him into the most violent agonies, which had nearly deprived him of his natural life, before he met with any indignity from the Jews and Romans. Even this was not sufficient: he felt the effects of the loss of this life, by being given up to the power of wicked men, who, though they might disagree and fight with one another, agreed against him to put him to death.

Thus we now see a sinless and divine person undergoing the very same punishment that was due to guilty man, and deprived of life, along with the whole creation. The original cause of death was the want of confidence in God on the part of man. By faith in the Saviour this confidence was restored to man, and it was a matter of indifference whether they believed in him as past, present, or to come, so they believed in his character and what he had done, or would do. It is easy to see that this want of confidence is removed by faith; for, as long as we believe that any person is our enemy, we will not ask any favour of him, much less trust our life in his hands, though we will do so if very firmly persuaded that he is our friend. Now the very same thing that Jesus Christ did, all his followers do. When he *voluntarily* suffered himself to be deprived of his spiritual life, he put as much confidence in God as ever; because he had in his nature a principle which led him to do so. His followers who are *naturally* destitute of this spiritual life, yet put the same confidence in God, because that divine principle is *communicated* to them by faith.—Let us now take another view of the state of things when our Saviour died.—A divine person, who never had sinned, deprived of both spiritual and natural life, yet having put his confidence in God, and resigned himself entirely to his will. A great number of others who had sinned, and suffered the punishment due to that sin, yet put the same confidence. What must be the consequence on the part of God? Even the very thing that the scripture tells us did happen. The power of death was broken; the spiritual life being fully restored, involved in it both soul and body of the believers. As the Saviour had from eternity a life infinitely superior to that of Adam, he entered not into that life which Adam had enjoyed, but that which he himself had be-

fore the foundation of the world. As, by his connection with man in his natural state, he had lost both spiritual and natural life; and as the latter, once forfeited could not be restored, because God's word cannot be reversed, so his followers, by their connection with him, became partakers of his divine life also. The Saviour therefore rose from the dead, and along with him *many* others, I suppose *all* the Old Testament saints and ascended into Heaven, now their natural residence.

If I have been tedious in my answer to these two paragraphs of Mr. Paine, it is because of the very great importance of the subject. The Saviour of mankind never came to *prevent* our dying, nor even to *restore* such a life as we now enjoy. He was not deprived of his natural life by any action of the Deity against him, but by the power of the devil; as had been said at the beginning, "He shall bruise thy head, and *thou* shalt bruise his heel." It is not true, as many have asserted, that God acted against him, or inflicted any torment upon his mind. He withdrew his wonted support, and allowed him to fall into the hands of wicked men. It is not true that Paul is a manufacturer of quibbles, when he mentions two Adams; neither is it true that he quibbles upon the word death; or that any sentence of the Deity was revoked, or that the believers of the gospel say it was revoked. Adam lost the true principle of life, and therefore was the father of all who *die*; Jesus Christ restored this principle, and therefore is the father of all who *live*. Had Jesus Christ prevented men from dying, Mr. Paine's objection might have held good, and yet he seems to be displeased that this was not the case.

On this subject Mr. Paine might have made another objection, which I am surprised that he hath not done; viz. that, in consequence of Adam's transgression, his body was to return to dust; but this was not the case with the body of Jesus Christ; of consequence, Mr. Paine might say, as Christ did not undergo the punishment inflicted upon Adam, he could not make any atonement for the transgressions of the human race. The answer to this objection, however, supposing it to have been made, is the same with what has been already given. Jesus Christ came not to restore the life which Adam had, but to give one infinitely superior; his body could not be reduced to dust by the action of the elements upon it, because he was superior to those elements. It was not by their action against him that *he* died, though that be the case with *us*. He was put to death by wicked men; and though they could have artificially reduced his body to dust by burning it, yet they were not allowed to do this, nor even to break his bones; for this would have shown that God never intended to raise him from the dead, if he allowed the same powers which destroy and dissolve our bodies

dies to destroy the body of our Saviour. The punishment inflicted upon Adam, we must observe, was, not that he should be kept in endless torment, but that his life should cease, and his body be reduced to dust. This sentence, being once passed, could not be reversed; and hence, though Jesus Christ has brought life and immortality to light, he hath never procured any alteration in the sentence pronounced upon Adam. When the dead are raised therefore, their bodies are *different* from what they are now; and the dissolution of the present body shows that they are to be so; for if the very same body were to be raised again, why should it be dissolved? This would be a kind of doing and undoing, characteristic of a weak and foolish being, and not of God. But with Jesus Christ the case was otherwise. He was to be raised with the very same body which he had before he died, and therefore no kind of corruption or dissolution was suffered to take place.

HAVING proceeded thus far with Mr. Paine, I must be excused for not going farther in the regular order of his book. The reason is, that I perceive his argument almost entirely exhausted, and it is needless to take notice of his repetitions of an argument already answered. In his 83d and 84th paragraphs he objects to the scripture account of redemption, as being "a mere pecuniary idea, corresponding to that of a debt which another person might pay."—But this is by no means the scripture idea. The situation of man, with regard to his maker, is indeed set forth as that of one owing an immense sum which he is absolutely unable to pay. The consequence is that God *freely forgives* him. He receives nothing, he wants nothing, and it is impossible that any thing can be given him. The affair of *merit* then is entirely out of the question, not only with regard to those who are redeemed, but to the Redeemer himself. This will most evidently appear, when we consider the nature of the debt which man owed. This was to keep the law of God; and, though he had kept it, the advantage would have been entirely his own; it was impossible that God could be made richer thereby. Let us next consider why this debt could not be paid by man himself. This must easily appear from what has been already said concerning the origin of evil. Man could not keep the commandments of God, because his own faculties, nay the very vital principle, (by which these faculties were upheld, by which thoughts were suggested to his mind, and on which his life depended every moment) were against him. This principle of our natural life is indeed no other than that same *devil*, about whom Mr. Paine makes such a work; and being so intimately connected with him, we may easily see why mankind are so ready to obey his commands; and we may also see the propriety of the scripture expressions, of the human race being taken captive by the devil, of the imaginations of man's heart being evil from

from his youth, &c. and why the expressions, thrown out in Mr. Paine's 85th paragraph, in supposed ridicule of christianity, are really proper. He tells us, that christianity teaches a man to "contemplate himself as an outlaw, as an outcast, as a beggar, as a *mumper*," &c. I know not the meaning of this last word; but, from the direct opposition between God and man, it is evident that we must always look upon ourselves in a very bad light when we think of approaching our maker.

TAKING the matter in this view then, that man owed a debt to God which he could not pay, and though he had paid it he could have *merited* nothing from God, we must easily see that the person who did pay the debt could merit as little. From what has been said concerning the obstacle to man's paying this debt, it is evident that the payment of it must have been accomplished by the removal of that obstacle. The obstacle, as we have seen, was the earthly faculties we now possess; and it was removed by communicating a principle, in consequence of which the divine faculties themselves could be bestowed upon us. In doing this the Saviour necessarily lost his life, as has been already shown. This was the utmost he could do, but still he *gave* nothing to God; and consequently could *merit* nothing from him; for God had from eternity *given* him that life, which he voluntarily parted with. To give it again could be no *debt* on the part of God; but, from the benevolence of his own nature, he gave the Saviour back the life he had before, and, along with him, a share of the same life to those whom he had redeemed.

BUT, Mr. Paine might say, the scripture expressly declares, that Christ gave himself "a *ransom* for all;" this therefore implies that there was a price paid to *somebody*, and, unless it was to the deity, to whom was it given? The answer is easy. The ransom was given to those who had mankind under their subjection, i. e. death and the devil. They obtained power over the Saviour, but were unable to hold him; and, in consequence of this inability, lost their power over his followers also. Hence the scripture says "I will *ransom* them from death;—I will *redeem* them from the power of the grave," &c.—It is an error of the first magnitude to suppose, that, when our Saviour suffered, there was an *opposition* betwixt God and him, or that he considered him in the light of one who had broken his commandments. The withdrawing his wonted support from him was done, if we may say so, with *regret* and *grief* on the part of the Deity; and accordingly, when, in consequence of being thus abandoned, the Saviour was thrown into such an agony as threatened his life, an *angel* was sent, not to *destroy* but *strengthen* him. This shows, that God never did, nor would, act against his Son, and consequently that the latter did not at all suffer by any kind of *wrath* immediately from him, but, as I have
already

already said, by his being given up into the hands of wicked men. It is an error of no less magnitude to suppose that, when the human race fell, there was any thing like *wrath* or *enmity* on the part of God. The miseries into which they fell were unavoidable, and arose from the nature of things, which could not be changed. The wrath, opposition and enmity, lay entirely on the part of man. Hence the scripture tells us, that God loved the world, while *they were yet enemies*; and he sent the Saviour not to reconcile *himself* to the world, but to reconcile *the world* to him; and Paul uses this remarkable expression, for himself, and the rest of the apostles, "we therefore, as ambassadors in Christ's stead, beseech you, be ye reconciled to God!"

BUT, it may still be said, if God was not angry with the world, why would he destroy them? In answer to this we must observe, that the destruction of the wicked proceeds from the opposition betwixt the divine nature and their nature. We know that, in this world, the invisible elements, the fire, light, air, electric fluid, &c. are formed into a certain system, or their powers are directed in a certain way, by which they act upon our bodies so as to produce life. This depends on the proper organization of the body; and when this organization is so far put out of order, that the action of the elements does not preserve it, they destroy and reduce it to dust. In like manner, if any body, though ever so well organized, happens to be put into a place where the elements form no system for its support, as for instance into fire, it will there be consumed and destroyed; but in neither case will there be any change in the nature of the elements themselves. Just so it seems to be in the invisible and spiritual world.

HERE the Deity himself comes in place of the powers of this world. He is the air they breathe, the sun that gives them light, &c. and his powers form a system for the support of those that are conformable to his law. Others, who conform not to this law, cannot be supported by such a system; because their spirits are, as it were, *organized* in a different way; and the very system that preserves the one destroys the other. A wicked man therefore, in the next world, feels himself in the midst of flames; though in truth this is nothing more than the very power which preserves life to the righteous. Matters cannot be otherwise, unless God should change his nature, which is impossible; or that the man should change his, which is then as impossible for him to do, as, in this world, it would be for him to restore the fabric of his body, after it was broken to pieces.

HAVING thus set forth, as plainly as I can, the Scripture doctrine of man's redemption, which to me appears exceedingly plain, simple, and intelligible, and in the highest degree consonant to reason, I might now take leave of our author altogether. As

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long, however, as he has any shadow of *new* argument, I shall still continue to answer. In his 105th paragraph he says that the christian religion "introduces between man and his Maker an *opaque* body, which it calls a Redeemer, as the moon introduces her opaque self between the earth and the sun; and it produces by this means a religious, or an irreligious eclipse of light. It has put the whole orbit of reason into shade" As well might he tell us that the sun is an *opaque* body betwixt us and the light; and that we should see much better if he were annihilated. It is only by means of Jesus Christ that the Deity becomes visible at all; and when the Scripture tells us that "in him dwelleth the whole fulness of the Godhead *bodily*," I think there is no reason to complain of his being interposed as an *opaque* body between the Deity and us. The parallel betwixt the natural and spiritual light is most exactly kept up throughout the Scripture. Jesus Christ is called the *sun* of righteousness; when he appeared to John, his countenance was as the *sun* shineth in his strength, &c. As the whole of the natural light is collected into the body of the sun, and by him sent forth throughout the creation to answer every different purpose, so is the whole of the Godhead concentrated as it were in the body of Jesus Christ, whence it flows upon the redeemed, giving to them the very life and happiness of the Creator himself; and this is the true meaning of the Scripture-phrase of the "angels of God ascending and descending upon the son of man." These angels are not created and limited spirits, as is commonly supposed, but certain portions of the divine spirit itself sent forth to execute particular purposes. Thus, in the giving of the Holy Ghost at first, the spirit separated himself into different powers, as of apostleship, prophecy, &c. each of which took possession of a particular person; and hence, when Peter was miraculously delivered from prison, unknown to the other disciples, and knocked at the door, they thought it was his *angel*: hence also we read of the *angels* of the churches, the seven *spirits* of God, the seven *angels* which stand before God, &c. With these spirits the Saviour of mankind is continually surrounded and covered, as the sun is by the light continually irradiating and darting out from him. When he comes to judge the world, he appears "in the glory of the Father, in his own glory, and of the Holy angels," that is he appears as the supreme God the Creator and upholder of the universe; as the Saviour and judge of mankind; and as the Almighty, whose power nothing can resist, and before whom no evil can stand.

HAVING thus, in some measure epitomized the christian religion, let us next see what Mr. Paine has to show in opposition to it. But, in order to get a glimpse of his system, I must connect some parts of his work very distant from each other.

MR. PAINE.

MR. PAINE.

88. "The word of God is the Creation we behold: and it is in *this word*, which no human invention can counterfeit or alter, that God speaketh universally to man.

148. "The true Deist has but one Deity; and his religion consists in contemplating the power, wisdom, and benignity of the Deity in his works; and in endeavouring to imitate him in every thing moral, scientific, and mechanical.

212. "I trouble not myself about the manner of future existence. I content myself with believing, even to positive conviction, that the power that gave me existence is able to continue it, in any form and manner he pleases, either with or without this body; and it appears more probable to me that I shall continue to exist hereafter, than that I should have had existence as I now have, before that existence began."

REMARK.

BEFORE we enter into any discussion of the question whether the creation be the *word* of God, there is a necessity for a previous consideration of the difference between a *word* and a *work*. I am indeed extremely unwilling to enter into subtle discussions of any kind, but as all with whom I ever conversed on the subject, and, I believe, the great majority of mankind, have called the creation the work of God, and Mr. Paine alone calls it his *word*, he ought certainly either to have said that there is no distinction between a *word* and a *work*, or to point out where the difference lies; but as this is not done I must attempt it, in order to show the fallacy of his assertion. When we see a piece of well regulated and curious machinery, would Mr. Paine call this the *word*, or the *work* of the artist? If he adopted the same language with regard to machines of human invention that he has done concerning the vast machine of the universe, people would undoubtedly say that he was mad; for all of them know very well that a word and a work are quite different. To make this difference as plain in writing as it is in our own minds, is perhaps impossible; nevertheless I shall define a word to be an *expression of man's will*; a work to be an *expression of his power and knowledge*. It is easy to see that, according to this definition, there is a connection between a man's moral character and his *word*, but much less between it and any piece of *mechanism* which he makes. Thus we may say, when we see a watch, that he was surely a good and benevolent man, who made such a useful machine, and had the good of his fellow creatures much at heart; but, if we argue thus, we may be very much mistaken; for we know that watch-makers, as well as others, exercise their professions for their own interest. Again, when we

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hear of the multitudes slaughtered by guns and bayonets, we might conclude that gunsmiths are the worst people imaginable; but here we would be as much mistaken as before. With a man's *word* it is quite otherwise. Should we hear a man swearing that he would destroy or injure another without any cause, we could not hesitate at pronouncing him a bad man, even though his purpose should be disappointed. Now with respect to the creation, considered as the *work* of God, we must be in the same doubt as about any other piece of mechanism. It shows his power and skill in contrivance, but it cannot show his moral character. The difficulty is still greater, when we consider the difference between God and a human mechanic. The latter gives away the machines he makes to others, who are accountable for the uses they make of them, but the Deity continually superintends the universe, and sees with apparent indifference the good and evil. Without revelation, therefore, we must look upon him in the same light that we would upon a father, who saw his children killing and wounding one another, and did not take their arms from them. If we call the creation the *world* of God, we are still worse; for then it directly follows, that evil comes not by the *permission*, but by the express *will* and *desire* of God himself. It is in vain that Mr. Paine attempts to skim over this difficulty by a kind of quotation from our Saviour, in par. 93. "Do we want to contemplate his mercy? We see it in his not withholding that abundance even from the unthankful." Our author has no right to use the words of our Saviour, or any thing like them; and it is a proof of his having no such right, that they will never answer his purpose. Were I a disbeliever of the Scripture, I would say, that if the Deity is kind to the wicked, it is at the expence of the righteous, whom the wicked are thus allowed to torment and destroy at pleasure. If it would be cruelty to destroy the wicked, it is more so to allow them to destroy the righteous; especially when we consider that it would require only the suspension of the human faculties for a short time to prevent them from any action whatever. Thus, when the Sodomites came to break up Lot's door, the angels prevented them, not by destroying them, but by striking them blind. Why could not the same happen to a robber when he first goes out on the highway, or to any other person who wishes to do a bad action? If we say that evil came into the creation, not *willingly* on the part of God, but was suffered for a certain purpose, and that every one, who has lost any thing in consequence of it, will be amply recompensed; this indeed solves the difficulty: but, how come we to know all this? Not from contemplating the revolutions of the planets, I am sure;—nor from any thing in the creation; for, from what we *have* seen, we never can suppose that we *will* see any thing in this world, but an unaccountable mixture of good and evil; and what

is applicable to this world must be applicable to any other. There must therefore be a *word* of God, expressive of his *will*, and explanatory of his *work*, without which we could know nothing at all about him. There are many machines, of *human* invention, so intricate, that an explanation of them must be given before they can be understood, even by men of as great abilities as Mr. Paine. If then we cannot at all times understand the works of man without an explanation, how can we pretend to understand, not only the works of God, but to know the nature of the Creator himself from these works, without any explanation given by him? I conclude therefore that there is a *word* of God distinct from the creation, and that the Scriptures are this word; because they explain what I could never have explained by myself.

NEXT let us consider Mr. Paine's practical religion, which, it seems, consists in imitating the Deity in every thing moral, scientific, and mechanical! As to the *morality* of the Deity, it is plain and evident, that, without the Bible, we can know nothing of it; so that the only thing the Deists have to do is to imitate the Almighty in his science and mechanics; that is, in his *knowledge* and *power*. A very easy task no doubt! and the exhortation to do so comes very well from Mr. Paine, who manifests a degree of *ignorance* beyond the generality of mankind; and which really surprises me, considering the great number of people he must have conversed with, and from whose conversation one would have thought he might have derived some benefit. It is remarkable that those who contest the truth of the Scripture always bring themselves into a dilemma by something or other they quote from it, or say about it. Mr. Paine esteems the book of Job more highly than any other part of Scripture; and yet there is not a book in the whole which sets forth in a stronger light the utter insufficiency of man to imitate, or even to *understand* the power of God. Mr. Paine tells us par. 96. that *some* chapters in Job "are true *deistical* performances; for they treat of the Deity through his works." I wish he had told us *what* chapters; for in those I am going to quote, the *Deity himself* speaks to Job, out of a whirl-wind, and challenges him to imitate him in *any* thing either *scientific* or *mechanical*. "Where wast thou, says he, when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare if thou hast understanding!—Have the gates of death been opened to thee, or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death." Let Mr. Paine answer *one* of these questions, and then talk of imitating the Deity in *every thing* scientific. Jesus Christ, of whom he has such a mean opinion, answers them both. To the first he says, "when he prepared the heavens, I *was there*;—when he appointed the foundations of the earth." To the second he replies "I have the keys of hell and of death." Thus much for imitating the *science* of the Deity, let us now see

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what can be done with his *mechanics*, and here I shall only quote a single question : Canst thou bind the sweet influence of Pleiades? (the constellation called the *seven Stars*) If Mr. Paine cannot answer the question, he may apply to the person who holds the *seven Stars* in his right hand.

I cannot pretend to point out the answers given to all the questions put to Job, or even to understand the meaning of many of the questions themselves ; though I am perfectly satisfied that every one of them is answered by Jesus Christ, who *alone* is capable of imitating God in every thing, *scientifically* and *mechanically* ; and hence is called the *wisdom* of God and the *power* of God. I mention this only by the bye, to show the perfection of his character in every point of view. He has answered every question which God put to man, and he has done every work which God required of man ; so that in all things he has showed himself worthy of being the head and Saviour of the human race.

I must lastly consider the account given by our author of his belief in a future state. He tells us first, that he does not trouble himself about the *manner* of this existence. I know not what he means by this, unless it be that he does not care whether he is in heaven or hell ! The strong belief he expresses in the power of the Deity to continue his existence, either with or without the body, is no doubt very well founded ; but the last part is totally unintelligible to me. " It appears, says he, more probable, that I shall continue in existence hereafter, than that I should have had existence as I now have, before that existence took place". Whether he means by this, that a future state is more probable than a state of pre-existence, which some have dreamed of, I cannot tell ; the only conclusion I can draw from the whole is, that his definition of the word of God is false, his religion impracticable, and his account of a future state unintelligible.

I formerly said that I knew not upon what foundation our author rested his belief of a God. In writing that sentence I did not advert that Mr. Paine had set forth his reasons for believing this in his 94th paragraph.

MR. PAINE.

94. THE only idea, man can affix to the name of God, is that of a *first cause*, the cause of all things. And, incomprehensibly difficult as it is for man to conceive what a first cause is, he arrives at the belief of it from the tenfold greater difficulty of disbelieving it. It is difficult beyond description to conceive that space can have no end ; but it is more difficult to conceive an end. It is difficult beyond the power of man to conceive an eternal duration of what we call time, but it is more impossible to conceive a time when there shall be no time. In like manner of reasoning, every thing we behold carries in itself the internal evidence that it did

not make itself. Every man is an evidence to himself that he did not make himself; neither could his father make himself, nor his grandfather, nor any of his race; neither could any tree, plant, or animal, make itself; and it is the conviction arising from this evidence, that carries us on, as it were, by necessity, to the belief of a first cause eternally existing, of a nature totally different to any material existence we know of, and by the power of which all things exist, and this first cause man calls God."

REMARK.

IN the first part of this paragraph I can discover nothing but a parcel of contradictions. Thus, "the only idea we can have of God is of a *first cause*." Be it so; but what is a first cause? No body can tell says Mr. Paine, because it is *incomprehensibly* difficult to do so! Why then do we believe it? Because it is *more* difficult to disbelieve it. But what can be *more* difficult than that which is *incomprehensibly* so? Mr. Paine must give an answer for I cannot.

AGAIN, it is difficult *beyond description* to conceive that space can have no end." Why then do we believe it? Because it is more difficult to disbelieve it. But what is *more* difficult than that which is difficult *beyond description*!

A third time we must have this nonsense repeated, and we must next believe something difficult beyond the power of man to conceive &c. If Mr. Paine has yet any grains of COMMON SENSE remaining, if his whole stock be not expended in the pamphlet so called, I would ask him why he finds fault with the christian religion? Does it enjoin any thing more difficult to be believed than what is incomprehensibly difficult, difficult beyond description, and difficult beyond the power of man? Certainly it does not; and yet we find all these difficulties, according to Mr. Paine in the simple belief of a Deity! If there are insurmountable difficulties in the way of believing a Deity, I do not see how it can be believed; and the person, who says so, appears to me an advocate for atheism rather than for religion of any kind.

IN the second part of this paragraph we have a very common argument for the existence of a Deity, viz. that the world could not make itself. But this, however common, is not any argument, but merely the taking for granted what ought to be proved. If we suppose the world to be created at all, the Creator must be presupposed; but the most consistent Atheists deny that ever it was created, and say that the system of nature itself is eternal. We may conclude, from the successive generation of animals and plants, that the first animal and the first plant were produced by a power which does not now exist in nature, at least that we cannot now perceive to exist; but we have no right to suppose that the world

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was made by this power. Besides, it is not power alone that constitutes a God; and though we should discover a being endowed with immense power, but malevolent in his nature, like the God of the ancient Mexicans, this would be the discovery of a *devil*, and not of a God. It is on account of this deficiency of character, that the heathen deities are called *devils* in the New Testament; and the true Deity is distinguished from all false Gods not only by his power, but by his goodness. It is indeed this last quality which only can distinguish the being we call God, from those whom we call *devils*; and this property can never be fully discovered, or indeed discovered at all, while death reigns in the world to such a degree as to destroy every creature in it. Some ancient Philosophers have pretended to discover the *anima mundi* as they called it, or the power which governs the world, as the soul does the body, but this cannot be God, on account of its destroying properties; and as this discovery was supposed to be the utmost effort of unassisted reason, I shall not detract from their merit; only must say that they discovered a *devil* and not God.

BUT, setting all this aside, let us come to experience. Is there a man among us who ever found out either *God* or *devil* by himself? Is not all our religious knowledge derived from education? Mr. Paine tells us so with respect to himself. He was educated as a Quaker, and the Quakers do not pretend to let their children find out divine truths of themselves. Neither do any party or sect of any religious persuasion that ever I heard of. The experiment therefore is yet to be made, Whether an infant left to itself would ever find out that there is a God. But this experiment cannot be made; because if an infant received not any education whatever, it could not speak, nor hold any converse with the rest of mankind; and if it did converse with them, there would be no possibility of preventing it from hearing and believing that there is a God. The *fact* therefore is, with respect to all men at present on the face of the earth, that they *did not* find out the Deity by any exertion of their natural faculties. If any man ever did so, it must have been *Adam*; and Mr. Paine does not neglect this last source of argument; for he tells us, in the last paragraph of his book, that "*Adam, if ever there was such a man, was a deist.*"—I cannot imagine why he should doubt of there having been *such a man*. He himself endeavours to prove in the 9th paragraph that the human race must have had an original; and if Mr. Paine will not allow the first man to have been called *Adam*, he may call him what he pleases; still he must have been *such a man as Adam*.—But, as this man undoubtedly derived his existence *immediately* from God, it is also certain that he must have derived *part* of his knowledge from the same source. We cannot suppose that God would leave him to wander about like a great infant, and to gain

experience at his own cost ; for thus he might have been destroyed even by not knowing his proper food. But if he derived *part* of his knowledge immediately from God, it is an inconsistency to say, that he did not derive the *whole* from him. Adam therefore could have been no *deist* ; for he must have known God before he knew his works ; it being evident, that while he received instructions from the Deity, he must have known who it was that instructed him *.

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* I must here endeavour to remove a difficulty naturally arising in the minds of those who believe the Bible, from Rom. i. 20. "For the invisible things of him, from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen; being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse," &c. This has commonly been urged as an argument for what is called natural religion, though in truth it is not. The Apostle does not here say, that we know by inspection that the world was created. On the contrary, he tells us, Heb. xi. 3. that, "through faith we understand that the worlds (the material and spiritual systems) were framed by the word of God." All that is asserted in this Epistle to the Romans is, that the existence of God being known by faith, in consequence of revelation or tradition delivered to us, his power and Godhead are known by his works; so that they were inexcusable who likened God to man, to beasts, birds, or serpents, as the heathens did. The works of creation undoubtedly tell any person of common sense, that God is not like any of these; and to the same purpose the Apostle argues with the Athenians, Acts xvii. 24. "God that made the world, &c. dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is he worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing," &c. The creation therefore does not prove God's existence. This is known by faith, and the creation is then a witness by which we know God's character, and distinguish between a true and false revelation.

It may here be objected, that I contradict myself, as having already asserted, that, from a mere inspection of the creation, we could not know whether God is merciful or cruel. This I still assert; but I likewise maintain, and the history of all nations bears me out in this assertion; that, along with the existence of God, all mankind (Mr. Laine himself not excepted) have by revelation, or tradition, a knowledge that God has sometime or other been displeased with mankind, and that it was incumbent on them to do something to please him. Here again the works of creation, or the natural reason of man derived from them, is sufficient to correct their traditions though ever so absurd. — Let us suppose this general proposition to be known, that

In his 105th paragraph our author says, "I recollect not a single passage in all the writings ascribed to the men called Apostles, that convey any idea of what God is." How can any man *recollect* what he does not *read*? Mr. Paine tells (par. 101) that he keeps no Bible, and how can he know what is in it? Those who read the Bible will easily remember that the man called the Apostle John defines God to be *light* and *love*. "God, says he, is *light*, and in him is no darkness at all."—"He that loveth, dwelleth in God, and God in him; for God is *love*." Here then are two definitions of what God is; but we search in vain for any definition throughout the whole of Mr. Paine's work. He told us that the only idea we could have of God, was of a first cause; and even this was incomprehensible. The only thing we can conceive of God therefore from our author's pamphlet is, that he is an *unknown* power. This total ignorance of the Deity, Mr. Paine has in common with the other deistical philosophers. It is reported of one, whose name I have forgot, that being asked, by a certain prince, to tell him what God was, he desired a day to consider of it. Next day, instead of returning any answer, he desired two days; and thus went on, continually doubling the time, without giving any solution of the question. This continual delay showed that *his* reason was insufficient to find out God. Mr. Paine indeed says expressly that he can *find out God*, though not *to perfection*. But, unless

that God has been offended with mankind, and the saying of the Apostle follows also, that "the goodness of God leadeth us to repentance." I say then, that though, without the aid of revelation, the works of creation are inscrutable, yet no sooner do we know, that the Deity has been offended, than it follows, from an inspection of the works of creation, that he is merciful. Had he been of a cruel and implacable disposition, he would have destroyed the whole human race at once, but as he does not so, we are thence led, or, if we act consistently with reason, ought to be led to put confidence in him; which is, in truth, the essence of a religion.

Again, we are certain that all nations who ever were in the world, have used sacrifices of one kind or other, which undoubtedly must have been from tradition or revelation. The least reflection, or the smallest glimpse of reason is sufficient to inform us that God has no personal use for any of these things; neither, because man had offended him, would he destroy a Brute. By fair inference therefore it follows, even to the most unenlightened, that God himself knew of some sacrifice which was of sufficient value to atone for the sins of mankind and thus the heathens themselves might be believers in Jesus Christ though they knew him not by name.

unless God be found out to perfection, I deny that he can be found out at all; for God is *perfect*; and the finding out any thing *imperfect* is not finding out God, but some imaginary being.—The scripture always describes him in the full perfection of his character, and particularly as uniting the two properties of justice and mercy, in which, he says, there is *none* like him. This indeed is the great defect of all the *Gods* that have ever been found out by man; for whatever degree of *power* they might ascribe to them, they never could find out the other attributes. Indeed how should they have done so, when these are only discoverable by revelation?

HAVING thus discussed most of the religious part of Mr. Paine's performance, let us next see what he says of human learning.—In this part he charges so much ignorance upon christianity, that one would think it had come into the world for no other reason but to extinguish all kinds of science.—Nevertheless, he tells us, that it was composed out of systems which existed before.—If this was the case, then the very *ignorance* of christianity was in the world before it was collected into one system, and it is unfair to charge the christian teachers with conjuring up any new quantity, seeing they only gathered what was in the world already.—But let us hear.

MR. PAINE.

III. "It is a fraud of the christian system to call the sciences *human inventions*; it is only the application of them that is human. Every science has for its basis a system of principles as fixed and unalterable as those by which the universe is regulated and governed. Man cannot make principles, he only can discover them."

REMARK.

Hence, that he may bring an accusation against christianity, our matchless author contends *principles* with the *sciences* built upon them. Man, he tells us, cannot *make* principles. Who says that he can?—But a *science* is as distinct from the principles on which it is built, as an house is from its foundation; and he might as well tell us, that a house, a pitcher, or a knife and fork, are not human inventions, because the ground on which an house stands, or the materials of which it and the other things are composed, are not human inventions.—But why should the *christian system* alone bear the blame of every thing? The heathens were as bad as the christians, and ought undoubtedly to come in for a share. Pythagoras, who was no christian, discovered, or fancied he discovered, that the square of the longest side of a right angled triangle is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides; and so much

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was he rejoiced at this fancied discovery, that he sacrificed an hundred oxen by way of thanksgiving.

IN this part of his work Mr Paine supposes that the system of nature is governed by fixed and unalterable laws; but, in another part, where he thinks proper to attack the doctrine of miracles, he speaks otherwise. "Mankind," says he, paragraph 191, "have conceived to themselves certain laws by which what they call *nature* is supposed to act; and that a miracle is something contrary to the operation and effect of those laws." What are we to conceive or think upon the subject?—Either nature must have laws, or it must have none. If it has no laws, what is become of the fixed principles of Science which Mr. Paine just now spoke of? Where is the immutability of the Deity, so evident in his works, or where is our certainty of any thing? "Unless," says Mr. Paine, "we know the whole extent of these laws, and of what are commonly called the powers of nature, we are not able to judge whether any thing that may appear to us wonderful, or miraculous, be within, or be beyond, or be contrary to her natural power of acting."—Here is a most wonderful field for uncertainty and scepticism. If we know not whether any thing be *contrary* to the laws of nature, as little can we know whether it be *agreeable* to them; and thus, in the most common affairs of life, we must be uncertain whether we act naturally or by miracle! But the question is not about what the powers of nature *can* do, but what they really do in certain circumstances and if we may expect them sometimes to do the contrary. Thus, we have always seen iron sink in water when thrown into it, without any support. Supposing then a piece of iron already thrown into a deep pool of water, and sunk to the bottom: Is there the least reason to suppose that this piece of iron would by any law of nature rise up to the top of the water and swim like wood? Certainly not. If then we saw a man throw in a stick into the same pool in which the iron had sunk, and thereupon the iron rise up and swim along with the stick, have we not all the reason in the world to say that this was a miracle? The dilemma there is very evident. Iron cannot be inclined to sink or swim either at the same moment, or by the same power. If it sinks by a *natural* power, we must say that it rises by a *supernatural* one, or by miracle; or if we say that it swims by a natural power, it must sink by miracle; so that, let us take which side of the question we will, we must have a miracle one way or other.

I HAVE formerly said that the *word* of God has *internal* evidence that it is not the word of man, because it informs us of that to which our senses cannot have any access. Just the same is the case with divine power. We know that natural or mechanical power of all kinds acts in a certain and determinate manner, so that we can calculate its effects before-hand. Thus, gravity and heat

heat act according to the quantity of matter; electricity and light, according to the surface; the force of levers and other mechanical instruments is as the space passed over by the moving power, &c.—Divine power acts without regard to any one of these, and is determined merely by the *purpose* for which it does act; and this purpose constantly is an opposition to evil in one way or other. Thus, when the whole nation of Israel had apostatized from the true God, Elijah called upon them to put the matter to a trial, and let the God, who answered by fire from Heaven, be their God. This was done, and fire came down in answer to his prayer, in such abundance, that not only the sacrifice, but the stones of the altar, on which it lay, were consumed. It is needless to quibble about the possibility of bringing down lightning by means of electrical kites, &c. The question is not *how* this might be awkwardly imitated, but for *what* purpose it was actually done. This as we have seen, was to convert a whole nation from idolatry to the knowledge of the true God; and therefore we have a right to conclude that it was done by the power of God. In like manner, the miracles done by our Saviour were all wrought ultimately to convert unbelievers to the knowledge of the true God. None of them were therefore done merely to show the *power* of doing, such as the conjuring up of ghosts, ascending into the air, &c. These we may expect from Mr. Paine, if he should hereafter receive any extraordinary gifts from the stars. But the miracles of God are of quite a different nature. All of them were done in favour of mankind; not to set up the person who did them above others, but to shew what kind of a being God himself is. Thus, if God delights in giving happiness to mankind, his power will always display itself for their good, and for no other purpose. The miracles of Jesus Christ were to cure the sick, make the maimed whole, restore mad people to their senses, and bring back the dead to life. In short, his whole business was to restore the creation to that original state of perfection which it had when it first came from the hands of its maker; and thus he showed himself to be the son of God, and that he acted by the power of God.

In opposition to all this astonishing power and goodness, Mr. Paine tells us of the ascent of a balloon in the air, the sparks of electricity, the attraction of a needle by a magnet, the recovery of persons who have been some time under water, the artificial representation of ghosts at Paris, and tricks of legerdemaine.—What meanness! What shameful imbecility of mind! As well might he tell us of the ascent of a cork in water, the sparks from a flint and steel, the motion of dust by the wind, the awaking people from sleep, and the putting on of a mask, the appearance of a shadow, or the picking of pockets; for this last, if dextrously per-
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formed, will have as much the appearance of miracle as any he has mentioned.

I SHALL conclude this subject of miracles with taking some notice of what Mr. Paine says in his 195th paragraph. "In the first place," says he, "whenever recourse is had to show, for the purpose of procuring that belief (for miracle, under any idea of the word, is a show) it implies a lameness or weakness in the doctrine that is preached." It is strange that this author cannot make choice of his words, but speaks like an idiot unacquainted with any language whatever. A miracle he tells us is a *show*—It is not—A theatrical representation of a miracle is a *show*, but not the miracle itself. An exhibition of wild beasts is a *show*, as long as they are kept chained; but, when the company are assembled, were the beasts to be turned loose among them, I presume this would be something more than show. The absurdity of Mr. Paine's argument in this sentence, and its blasphemy when applied to any thing divine, is scarcely to be paralleled. Let us take the example just now given. Suppose a *show-man* carrying about a lion, tyger, wolf, &c. and describing their properties. The company laugh at him, and every one defies him to prove what he has asserted, so that the man is at last provoked to unloose the beasts; who instantly tear in pieces those unbelievers. I ask Mr. Paine, would this be a proof of the lameness and weakness of the doctrine that had been preached to them concerning the strength and fierceness of those beasts? Would it not be a terrible confirmation of it? In like manner is it with the divine power itself. Mankind soon after the creation, sunk into the most desperate wickedness. God sent them prophets and they disregarded them. At last he had recourse to *miracle*, which our author blasphemously calls *show*, and destroyed them all by a flood. This, I think, instead of *lameness* and *weakness*, showed the *strength* and *firmness* of the doctrine preached by the prophets.

BUT, Mr. Paine may still say, It is inconsistent to suppose that God will employ force, which is incapable of converting people, though it may destroy them. I grant it: and God never employs force while reason will answer the purpose. When man will not reason, but oppose his pitiful power to God, the combat will not be declined; for God will likewise oppose his power, and destroy his enemies. This is precisely the way in which the scripture says that he acts towards man. First he gives them a law for their own good. If they obey not this law, he promises forgiveness, sends messengers to persuade them, and shows his Almighty power, not to "play tricks, to amuse them, and to make people stare and wonder," as our author *infamously* asserts, but to do them good. It lastly they obstinately reject his persuasion, and despise the mon-

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nifestation of his power to save, he will, by a manifestation of his power to *destroy*, convince them to their cost, that they ought to have attended to him at first.

Thus much for miracles;—a discussion into which I have been accidentally led, after I thought to have done with the religious part of Mr. Paine's work. Let us now return to the human sciences.

MR. PAINE.

136. "THEY not only rejected the study of science out of the christian schools, but they persecuted, &c.

138. "LATER times have laid all the blame upon the Goths and Vandals, but however unwilling the partizans of the christian system may be to believe or acknowledge it, it is nevertheless true, that the age of ignorance commenced with the christian system.

137. "There was no moral ill in believing that the earth was flat like a trencher, any more than there was moral virtue in believing it round like a globe. But when a system of religion is made to grow out of a supposed system of creation which is not true, and to unite itself there with in a manner almost inseparable therefrom, the case assumes an entirely different ground. It is then that errors, not morally bad, become fraught with the same mischiefs as if they were. In this view of the case it is the moral duty of man to obtain every possible evidence that the structure of the *heavens* (*heavens* I suppose it should be) or any other part of creation affords, with respect to systems of religion. But this the supporters or partizans of the christian system, as if dreading the result, incessantly opposed, and not only rejected the sciences, but persecuted the professors."

REMARK.

From these scraps, which I have tacked together and inverted, in order to make something connected out of them, we learn 1. That the christian religion is the source of all ignorance. 2. That this ignorance is founded on a notion that the earth is flat like a trencher, and 3. That it is every man's duty to study the structure of the Heavens in order to overthrow this system. The first of these positions is evidently false. There have been as learned christians as ever there were of any religion or persuasion; and it is most certain, that, with human science, religion of any kind has no necessary connection. Archimedes and Sir Isaac Newton, the one a heathen, the other a christian, were two as great men as ever the world saw; and there is no set of men to whom science of different kinds has been more indebted, than the Jews. The age of ignorance did not commence with christianity, as Mr. Paine says, but with that inundation of barbarians, who were not christians, and who overran the Roman empire. These, while yet unacquainted with christianity

christianity, showed as great aversion to all kinds of learning, as ever was shown by the most superstitious christian, or the most confirmed Deist. It is reported that a queen of the Goths was deposed by her nobility because she caused her son to be taught to read and write. The reason that they gave was, not that reading and writing was contrary to the christian system, but that the prince would thus be less fit for war.

BUT, if the christian system be the source of ignorance, Deism must undoubtedly be the source of learning, and if ever there was a nation of Deists, we may expect them to have been the most enlightened philosophers in the world. Alas! how miserably are we disappointed! The Moguls, who, in the 12th and 13th centuries, made such extensive conquests in Asia, were Deists; but such was their barbarity, that after they had conquered China, their emperor was ashamed of them; it being doubtful whether they, or the horses they rode upon, were the more intelligent beings.—Nay, let us consider the learning of Mr Paine himself. Having had every advantage of living in countries where learning has certainly made some advances; and having, at the age of only seven years, had discernment enough to renounce the christian religion, we might undoubtedly expect an amazing quantity of instruction from his work; but instead of this we find that his pamphlet, tho' perhaps very learned for a *Mogul*, yet makes a very ordinary figure among other literary works. I was for some time at a loss to account for this extreme deficiency of knowledge in a man who belonged to no church, until I recollected that "his own mind is his own church," which solves the difficulty at once, and shews his ignorance to be entirely original, and derived from nobody.

2. OUR *Mogul* insinuates, that the christian system is founded on a belief that the earth is flat like a trencher! How this came in his head is best known to himself; but certain I am, that, though I have read the Bible several times over, I could never find any such assertion, or any thing that bore the least resemblance to it. I know that ignorant people have made objections to the motion of the earth from some passages of scripture; but, even as our translation stands, these objections are not valid, and I have been told by those who pretend to be critics in the Hebrew language, that the translation is erroneous in these places, and particularly where it is said, "Let the earth *rejoice*," that it ought to be, "Let the earth *roll round*." Of this I do not pretend to be a judge. Our natural faculties are sufficient to give us the knowledge of natural things, and therefore I do not believe that any thing is *revealed* concerning them; though I am also convinced that the language of Scripture is more accurate than Mr. Paine could make it. In one part of his pamphlet, Mr Paine finds fault with the scripture speaking of the *ends of the earth*, when we know that the earth

is of a globular figure. At any rate this is not saying that the earth is flat like a trencher; but I maintain that this expression is exactly proper, though all the philosophers on earth were judges. A line from the North-eastern part of Asia, to the Southernmost point of America marks the *ends of the earth* in that direction. A line from the North-western part of America, to the most Southerly point of New Holland, marks the *ends of the earth* in another direction; and so of as many others as we please.

3. IT is the moral duty of our *Mogul* to study the structure of the Heavens, to counteract the pernicious effects of christianity.—Be it so; and let us see how well he has studied the structure either of Heaven or Earth! In the very superficial account he gives of the science of Astronomy, he tells us, that there are *six* planets which move round the sun; though even *christians* know that there is a *seventh* lately discovered, and which shows the influence of our sun to extend much farther than was formerly supposed, and nearly doubles the extent of our solar system. To make amends for this defect, he informs us that the earth is attended by *one* moon, but he does not tell us either what other planets have moons or how many they have. This, however, is one of the most curious parts in all Astronomy, and several very important inferences may be drawn from observing their phenomena.

PASSING by the rest of his discoveries, however, I must pay some attention to what he says on the plurality of worlds; and this the more especially, as from it he draws an argument against christianity.

MR. PAINE.

175. "FROM whence then could arise the solitary and strange conceit that the Almighty, who had millions of worlds, equally dependent on his protection, should quit the care of all the rest, and come to die in our world, because, they say, one man and one woman had eaten an apple. And, on the the other hand, are we to suppose that every world, in the boundless creation, had an Eve, an apple, a serpent, and a redeemer. In this case, the person who is irreverently called the Son of God, and sometimes God himself, would have nothing else to do, than to travel from world to world, in an endless succession of death, with scarcely a momentary interval of life."

REMARK.

BEFORE Mr. Paine made this objection, he ought to have brought much stronger proofs than he has done, that there is any other habitable world than the one we live in. The only argument I see in its favour, is in par. 165. "Those fixed stars conti-

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nue always at the same distance from each other, and always in the same place, as the sun does in the centre of our system. The probability therefore is, that each of these fixed stars is also a sun, round which another system of worlds, or planets, though too remote for us to discover, performs its revolutions, as our system of worlds does round our central sun." In this paragraph we see the plurality of worlds is only a *probability*; but, after ten paragraphs more, it becomes an infallible divine truth, and it is blasphemy to deny it. To me, except in the time of childhood, it never appeared either *probable* or *possible*, for the following reason, among others:—It is the business of our *sun*, and, I suppose of all others, to emit light in vast quantities, through an inconceivable space. This light must return to him, or he must very soon, nay in a moment, lose the power of sending it forth. But if the light of our sun, for instance, flies into another system, where light is likewise going forth and returning to another centre, the returning light must undoubtedly carry ours along with it, and it can never come back to our system any more. The same thing must happen to other suns. Now, the fixed stars being, according to the supposition, centres of systems, and our sun being evidently in the centre of a great number of these, it follows, that as he sends forth to them, so do they to him; and he will receive from them according to their *numbers* as well as magnitude; and therefore he will receive more than he gives. Thus, suppose six other suns placed round ours in a circle, supposing them all of equal magnitude, our sun will receive light in the proportion of six, and lose only in the proportion of one.—The consequence of this is, that the suns, situated in the circumference must continually decrease, and ours increase; until at last, his system becoming continually larger and larger, he would destroy and put out all the rest, as we see he does a common fire. Now, if the fixed stars are suns, it is as evident as the nature of the thing will admit, that not only six, but perhaps *six thousand* of them respect our sun as a centre; so that continually receiving a vastly greater quantity of light than he loses, he must have increased continually since the creation. This must infallibly be the case, whether our sun be in the centre or not; for unless we can suppose a figure which is *all* centre and no circumference, the outside suns must constantly lose light, while the interior ones gain it, and thus the universe would at last resolve itself into one vast central sun, with other bodies revolving about it; which I believe is the case just now, and was from the beginning.

I HAVE always looked upon the plurality of worlds, however fashionable the doctrine may be, as a most pitiful and childish chimæra. Instead of doing honour to the Creator, it degrades him into the character of a weak and vain mortal, who values himself upon the *number* or magnitude of his works. I cannot help ob-

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serving a striking similarity betwixt it and the heathen and Turkish fables. The heathens describe their gods as going to war in the shape of huge giants; Homer tells us that Mars when overthrown by Minerva, covered nine acres of ground as he lay on his back. In like manner, Mahomet appears to have valued the *heads* of his angels, not by their *intellectual faculties*, but by their magnitude. Stupidly imagining therefore, that he could thus do honour to the Deity, he says, that his throne is supported by angels, having such monstrous joint-heads, that a bird could not fly from one ear to the other in a thousand years!!!—Again, thinking that a single head, however big, was insufficient, he tells us, that in his journey to Heaven, he saw one angel with *seventy thousand* heads, and another with a *million*, but of what size he does not say. At last, however, in attempting to describe an enormous angel, he proportions him so unfortunately, that he must have been more than ten times as broad as he was long!

Now, from all this nonsense I do not conclude that Mahomet was a greater fool than others. His fictions proceeded from the very same source with the notion of the plurality of worlds, viz. a supposition that God sees and values things as we do. The contrary, however, must be apparent to every one who reasons fairly. What can the magnitude of any thing be to him who pervades all *space*, or number to him who has infinity and eternity? There is nothing valuable in God's sight but himself. He has connected himself with this world, and therefore the human race are valuable in his sight;—the rest goes for nothing, whether great or small. To say that he would connect himself with another species of beings, would argue in the first place some kind of imbecillity on his part, as if his first work was not sufficient; and it would likewise insinuate that the creature existed not for the Creator, but the Creator for the creature.

On the whole, it is evident to me, that if there are other suns and planets moving round them, they must be forever hid from our sight; because none of their light could come into our system without producing the confusion and destruction already mentioned. It is also certain that the fixed stars cannot be suns, because they seem to be of a perishable nature; for new stars, and those very bright, have been known to appear, and disappear again in a short time. Various changes are likewise observed among the permanent ones, and it is not true that the places of all of them are absolutely fixed. Some also diminish in lustre at times, and resume their former splendour after a certain period. These circumstances are inconsistent with the nature of a sun; for a very small change in him would destroy all the planets; and it is remarkable that the *sun*, and not the *stars*, is made the emblem of immutability in the Bible; for in this book, now so much undervalued, I have never

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been able to find an expression that could not stand the test of the most severe criticism.

If we will have a plurality of worlds then, we must seek for them in our new system; but here I will retort one of Mr. Paine's arguments upon himself. Like *Thomas* I will not believe without *ocular* demonstration at least. If Mr. Paine has seen any *men in the moon* he must show them to me also, or I will not believe him.

As I am very sensible that those, who have not studied astronomy, are apt to pay much more regard to the fancied discoveries of astronomers than they really deserve, I shall endeavour, as much as possible, to remove that prejudice: being thoroughly convinced, that nothing is more pernicious than that kind of fervility which prompts us to admire others as possessed of some kind of wisdom to which we cannot attain.

With regard to the prediction of Eclipses, about which Mr. Paine insists so much, it is entirely a mechanical operation, and totally depends upon a long observation of the motions of the moon, and the apparent motion of the sun. These observations have been made by great numbers of astronomers in various ages, and can be made by any person who can see, and will take the trouble of observing. Being rendered very correct by long experience, they were at last reduced into tables, by the use of which a man may calculate eclipses throughout his whole life time without ever looking at the heavens; and the best astronomer on earth cannot calculate an eclipse if his tables are taken from him. This may show the industry of astronomers, and it shows ever strongly the immutability and regularity of nature; but it never can show that the astronomers themselves are a jot more intelligent than we.

If the observations made on the celestial motions which are plain to every eye, cannot show the astronomers to be wiser than us, their pretended discoveries and conjectures concerning those things to which neither we nor they have access, would tempt us to think them stark mad.—I begin with the distance between the sun and the earth;—a most important point in astronomy; as upon it depend not only the distances of the different planets from one another, but the *size* of the sun himself as well as all the bodies which circulate round him. Now in this point astronomers are so far from being agreed that the sun has been placed at all distances, from three millions of miles to an hundred and four millions; and thus also we have suns and planets of as many different dimensions. Sir Isaac Newtown I believe to have been the greatest mathematician that ever lived, and he, as well as others, calculated the distance of the sun; but succeeding astronomers have added no less than *twenty four* millions of miles to his distance.—Considering all

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this then, I think I am justified in saying that neither the distances, nor the magnitudes, of the sun and planets are at all ascertained, or likely to be so.

BUT all this is nothing to what we meet with when speaking of the nature of light and of the celestial bodies. The absurdity and contradiction here is so immense, that it will scarcely be believed by those who have not read a number of astronomical writings; though there is not a word of what I am now going to say, that astronomers dare deny.—By grave and learned men, then, it has been asserted or *rationaly* conjectured. 1. That the particles of light are *twenty miles* distant from each other! 2. They are *two thousand miles* distant!! 3. That the sun might have emitted light for an *infinite* time without its ever returning to him, and yet lost no more than a few feet in diameter!!!—I think we can go no farther in this way; let us therefore turn to other subjects. 4. If each of the particles of light were in size only the millionth part of an inch, they would give as much pain as *gun* fired at the eyes out of a cannon. This position is supported by mathematical demonstration. 5. The fixed stars are all *guns*, though we may suppose some of them to be no more luminous than a *tallow candle*. 6. The sun and stars are great *earths*, vehemently heated. This is a conjecture of sir Isaac Newton, and is the more inexcusable in him, as he believed the Scriptures. Paul tells us that there are *celestial* as well as *terrestrial* bodies; but, according to sir Isaac, there are only *terrestrial* bodies hot or cold. 7. The sun is made of melted glass. 8. He is a *cold* and *black* globe of immense size, only covered with a *luminous fog*. 9. The sun does not give *heat* to the earth. Instead of this his rays attract heat to themselves from the air, 10. The spots sometimes seen on the sun are occasioned by the *luminous fog* above mentioned being dissipated, so that the black globe of the sun makes its appearance. 11. These spots are *unformed* worlds floating between us and the sun. 12. They are the smoke of volcanoes. 13. They are drofs floating on the solar ocean. 14. The comets are *messengers* going from one system of planets to another. 15. They supply the earth or atmosphere with water. 16. They are *planets* revolving round the sun. 17. They fall into the body of the sun and supply him with fuel. 18. Their tails are made of fire. 19. They are made of water. 20. The comets are the materials from which future worlds are to be made. 21. There is an hole through the moon. 22. She has no clouds. 23. She is subject to such violent thunder storms, that the lightning may be seen upon earth. 24. One of the mountains in the moon, called St. *Catherines*, is *nine* miles high. 25. It is *half a mile* high. 26. The moon has an atmosphere. 27. She has none. 28. The whole universe, *guns*, moon, planets, inhabitants, and all together, have, since

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the creation, been flying with incredible velocity through the vast expanse of space, setting out from *no place*, and landing *no where*, *FINIS coronat opus!*—I can go no deeper in absurdity. These are the fruits of studying nature without revelation; and this, according to Mr. Paine is to be our religion!

BUT, it will still be said, if there are no other worlds but this, to what purpose were such immense bodies created? In what manner can they be subservient to this world, many of them being absolutely invisible to us without the help of telescopes?—Is it not rational to suppose that they are formed for the habitations of living creatures? In answer to all this, I say, that we can know nothing but from revelation, or the information of our senses. As far as these clearly direct us, we may *reason*, and conclude with certainty. Where they begin to fail we may still *conjecture* rationally; but where they are totally silent, though we may *imagine*, it is absolutely without either *reason* or *probability*. When asked therefore of what use the planets are to this earth, I answer, they give light to it, and the eclipses of Jupiter's satellites serve to ascertain the longitudes of different places. If still further pressed, I will say, that I believe they answer other purposes, tho' I cannot tell what they are.—I cannot believe that there are any planets circulating round the fixed stars, because no man hath seen or can see them. I cannot believe that the moon and planets are inhabited, because no man can see the inhabitants, and I cannot believe that they are habitable worlds, because I cannot perceive about them, that apparatus for life which is so remarkable in this world. In the first place, there is none of the planets, excepting that called Mars, which shows any sign of being surrounded by an atmosphere, or *air*, so necessary to our life. But the great objection, to me, is this. We know that our life depends entirely upon the absorption of the sun's light by the air and earth: But *all* the planets, *Mars* as well as the rest, reflect the light of the sun so powerfully, that the best polished looking glasses we have, are vastly inferior to them in this respect. The moon, which is nearest to us, and, of consequence, ought to be best known, is evidently very rough and unequal in the surface, and likewise full of dark spots; yet the best mirror which man could contrive, would not, at her supposed distance, give half the light. Opticians have made comparisons between the light of the sun and the moon; and the admirable *agreement* among them shows how well fitted they are for making such calculations. One tells us that the light of the moon is *forty five thousand* times less than that of the sun; another, that it is *ninety thousand* times less, and a third, that it is *three hundred thousand* times less. It is easy to see that every one of these calculations must be false; or the moon must reflect much more light than she receives. Without entering farther into the subject,

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therefore, I think there is every reason to believe that the celestial bodies reflect *all* the light they receive from the sun; nay it is very remarkable that the planets, which shine only by reflected light, are much brighter than those which they would have us to believe are suns; and so strongly is the absurd notion of other suns rivetted in their minds, that Herschel, the celebrated astronomer of the present day, having discovered a very bright star by his telescope, would needs have it to be a planet, on account of its splendor; as if a planet could be brighter than the sun which illuminates it!—But, to come to the point. This excessive reflection of light, must certainly deprive these bodies of all that warmth and kindly influence of the sun, which to us seems absolutely necessary to animal life. If there are any inhabitants in the planets then, they must be absolutely indifferent as to heat or cold, meat, drink, or clothing; for their resplendent habitations would produce none of all these necessities. Add to this, that they could see nothing but the sun, or the rest of the celestial bodies; for wherever they turned their eyes upon their own world, the strong reflection of light would be the same as if they looked at the sun himself. Seeing even that of the six worlds enumerated by Mr. Paine, *one*, viz. that which we inhabit absorbs the sun's light, and the rest reflect it, and seeing we live only by this absorption, we have every reason to suppose that the planets, being made for perfect reflection, are not made for the habitations of living creatures,

I might now proceed to consider Mr. Paine's mechanical knowledge, which would certainly be found equally weak with what he displays in other respects; but, having extended this treatise to near twice the length I intended, it seems better to omit this discussion, observing only that his description of such a common instrument as a *steelyard* is erroneous, and that of an *array* absolutely false. Yet will this vain author pretend to decide upon the most important matters, both in this world and the next, when he cannot write common sense about the most trivial things. How can we, without contempt and indignation, behold the effrontery of one blissing forth a parcel of nonsense about *science and learning*, who appears to have less knowledge than a school-boy; and who, in the coarsest language, accuses the christians of putting learning out of the world, when his own ignorance knows no bounds! One word more with him then, and I have done.

THROUGHOUT the whole of this extraordinary performance, Mr. Paine labours to prove that God *hath not* revealed himself to us by any thing capable of being conveyed in human language.—He hath not indeed *directly* said that God *could not* do so; but he hath said it *in effect*, by insisting so much upon the insufficiency of human language to be the medium of conveyance. Thus, he, as
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well as other Deists, undertakes to prove a *negative*, and how are they to do this? The position that God *hath not* done any thing can be proved only in two ways. Either the thing must be inconsistent with the known character of God; or the person, who says so, must know *all* things that God hath done. It is not true that human language is unfit for conveying the knowledge of revealed truths to mankind. Language is the means by which *all* knowledge is conveyed to our minds, that of Astronomy not excepted. Perhaps Mr. Paine may think that people would be the better astronomers for being deaf and dumb; but, granting that it were so, Astronomy is a *science*, and must be learned as well as others. It would no doubt contribute greatly to the improvement of all science, if our author could persuade people to cut out their tongues, and stop their ears; but still they must converse, and learn their astronomy by signs; which is in fact learning Mr. Paine's *revelation* by human language; the very thing he contends against. As therefore language is plainly the medium, and the only one, which God has given for the continuation and increase of knowledge among the human race, it is not inconsistent with his character to say, that he has written or dictated a book in human language, to be the standard of our faith and practice in this world. Mr. Paine, and the other Deists, who say he hath not written such a book, must also indirectly say, that they know *every thing* which he hath done. It is impossible to avoid this dilemma, for, if they know not every thing that God hath done, how do they know that he hath not done this? Thus, every one who denies that God hath given to mankind, any written precept for the regulation of their conduct in this world, doth in fact exalt himself into an equality with God, by saying that he knows *all* that God hath done!

LET us now see what is the sum of all the knowledge we have derived, or can derive from the study of nature unassisted by revelation. In Astronomy we observe that certain bodies move round the sun in certain times. By means of telescopes we discover in them, opaque spots not discernible by the naked eye; we see that some of these bodies have others circulating round them, and we observe certain changes on the surfaces of most of them. These are *facts*, but we can infer nothing from them concerning the nature of these bodies, and the specimen I have given of astronomical conjectures, is, I think, sufficient to throw the most sanguine into despair, as to any thing certain to be expected in this way.—Let us descend from the Heavens to the earth, and we shall find ourselves not one jot better. If we inquire concerning the original state of the earth, we are told, 1. It was a comet, 2. It was part of the sun, 3. It was a chaos, 4. It was part of Hell, 5. It was made of *particles*. 6. It was made of *atoms*. 7. It was made

of *nerves*. 8. It was made of oyster-shells. 9. It was made of *Ideas*, and hath no exillence at all, and 10. Lattly, it has been demonstrated that there are no such things as ideas, and therefore there is no world, either real or imaginary.—Here I think we are as fairly settled in Bedlam, with our knowledge of the earth, as of the Heavens. Let us therefore turn to some other subject.—If we inquire into the composition of any thing we see, a stone, for instance, the case is equally bad. We are told that it consists of parts infinitely divisible, and that these adhere together by the power of attraction; but it is found that some substances, such as steel springs, which, from their appearance, we should think had a strong attraction among their parts, yet fly out on being compressed, as if their parts repelled one another. This has induced a supposition that every particle of matter has around it a sphere of attraction, and within that a sphere of repulsion. Hence again it follows, that no two bodies, nor two parts of the same body, touch one another. Next we are told, that as the parts of any substance never discover themselves, we have no occasion to suppose that there are any such parts. Consequently, matter consists entirely of *attractions* and *repulsions* diffused around *physical* points. But, as these physical points are only imaginary centres of spheres, it follows, that the whole system of nature, sun, moon, stars, planets, and inhabitants, consist only of attractions and repulsions, without any thing to be attracted or repelled! Again, as attractions and repulsions are *not matter*, and matter consists entirely of them, it follows immediately that matter is *immaterial*; and, by a similar process of reasoning, it follows, that God and spirits are *material*!

It may be said, that all I have advanced, is only a collection of whims, to which nobody pays any regard, but let us see how much better we are when we come to consider the history of mankind, the origin of language, of society, and government. I know not by what strange fatality men have been influenced, when treating upon these subjects; but *all*, without exception, have joined in the supposition, that man was at first in a most savage state, without even the power of speech; and that, by a gradual and progressive improvement, he has transformed himself into what he now is. Extravagant as the supposition is, however, that an infinitely wise God should create a *savage*, and leave him to become a *man* of himself, it is followed by others equally extravagant. It is supposed, that these dumb savages entered into a *social compact*, and each individual agreed to give up part of his natural rights for the benefit of the whole. How could all this be done without the use of speech? How were they to be brought together? Was it by the influence of the stars, or by thoughts *bursting* into their minds, as is the case with Mr. Paine? It certainly

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ly must have been very entertaining, to behold an assembly deliberating upon the most important matters, in a language derived from the squeaking of pigs, the chattering of magpies, &c. and if to this we add the idea of a certain noble author, that the first men went upon all fours, and had *tails* like monkeys, the picture becomes so ridiculous, that I question if it could be paralleled in the records of bedlam, if any such had been kept.

I AM extremely sorry that I have forgot in what manner our ancestors first got rid of these useless appendages called *tails*; perhaps it was by *custom*, as a learned physician tells us, that the bones grow hard by custom; but, be this as it will, since the *ab-juration* of tails, it seems that the mental faculties of man have arrived, and will arrive, at an amazing height of perfection. The discoveries already pointed out, shew, in some measure, to what height they *have* arrived, and the following are some improvements, which, it seems, may *reasonably* be expected. 1. That we may easily cause the wind to blow from what quarter we please, and when once this power is acquired, it ought then to blow only from the South-west! 2. That a *plough* may be turned into a field, and perform its office without any need of superintendence. 3. That *marriage* shall be abolished as a *fraud*, the *worst* of all *properties*, and the *most odious* of all *monopolies*! And, 4. That man, by an exertion of his mental faculties, shall render himself IMMORTAL!!!

LET it not be thought that I here misrepresent, or wish to do so. All the ridiculous chimeras I have enumerated, are to be found in the Philosophical Transactions, the works of Priestley, Rousseau, Hume, and other people of great estimation and respect, on account of their learning—I am incapable of enumerating, though I were willing, the thousandth part of those absurdities which have been imposed upon the world under the name of learning. What I have said already, will, I hope, justify me in the opinion I have long entertained, that all human science, detached from revelation, and carried beyond the limits of our senses, degenerates into MADNESS.

IN opposition to all this, let us see what the doctrine of the scripture really is.—The great objection against the christian religion is the doctrine of the Trinity; and so great, it seems, is the absurdity of this, that Dr. Priestley, with whom some of the intolerable nonsense I have mentioned, goes well down, yet rejects as absurd, the idea of a Trinity. It is absurd, we are told, to believe that three are one. I deny it. Our body is *one*, but it is composed of many members. Our understanding is *one*, but it is composed of a number of different powers. I will submit it to any man who chuses to give me an answer, whether he be a christian or not; Is it in his power to think of any thing either in Heaven or in Earth, which does not consist of an innumerable multitude

multitude of others of a similar nature, which we call *parts*; and the thing that unites, or makes them one, is their acting in concert, or being joined in such a manner, as to answer some particular purposes. The only idea of *unity* therefore we have, includes not only *plurality*, but *infinite* plurality. How comes it to pass then, that when this idea (which no man can exclude from his mind) is applied to the Deity, it should at once become the greatest absurdity in the world? I can give no other reason, but that when once people get into a habit of talking absurdly about *natural* things, they cannot bear to speak rationally about *spiritual* things. But, waving this, if the Bible says, that in the Deity there is an assemblage of an infinite number of distinct powers, all of them eternal and uncreated; can any man say that this is absurd?—Assuredly not.—If these powers are called the *angels of God*, the *spirit of God*, or the *Holy Ghost*; and if there is a being in whom all these reside, is there any absurdity in calling this being *God the FATHER*, and saying that the angels obey him?—I see none at all. Lastly, if God the Father has directed all these powers to concentrate themselves upon a certain person, similar in the manner of his existence to man, only formed out of the Divine Essence instead of this earth, and if these powers continually obey the second person, is it absurd to call such a person the *Son of God*?—I still cannot see the least inconsistency; and this is most certainly the Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity.

Thus being premised, I shall conclude with giving a short view of the Scripture doctrines of creation, the fall and redemption of man, and the rewards and punishments set forth as his final and eternal state.

1. GOD created the world by his omnipotence. The acting person was the SON. The materials from which the world was created are unknown.

2. THE order in which all things were created was the most proper that can be conceived. The most necessary agents were first made, and afterwards those which depended upon them. Thus the *light*, which is evidently the vital principle of the whole creation, was first made, then the air, which, by absorbing part of the water, thus became a source of life and nutrition to the creatures afterwards to be formed. After the plants were formed, the sun was next made, that is the light, formerly created, was collected into that body, to preserve and give them life; and lastly, the whole world being completely finished, MAN, destined to be Lord of it, was also created, and instructed by his Maker in every thing useful. It is easy to see, that had the creation gone on in any other way, it must have been worse. Had man been created while there was neither light nor air, he could not have lived. Had he been made before the water retired, he must have been drowned, &c. Had the Earth been a comet wandering up and down for an immense

menſe ſpace of time without an inhabitant, the Creator muſt have been chargeable with folly. Had the ſun ſhone for a vaſt length of time, when there was nothing to be enlivened by his rays, it would have been an abſurdity. Had an immenſe heap of oyſters, cockles, and muſcles been created, *from eternity*, in order to make a world out of their ſhells, it would have been ridiculous. Had the world for many thouſand years been one continued volcano, it would have looked like the work of a *devil*. Yet moſt of theſe are the conjectures of *wiſe* and *learned* men, who laugh at the abſurdity, or *whimiſical* nature of the Scripture account of the creation !

3. MAN, being *effentially* inferior to God, naturally diſbelieved his word, and thus became ſubject to miſery and death. Thus he became afraid of God, and an inſuperable enmity took place between them.

4. As man could not by himſelf recover the favour of God, it was reſolved that God, ſhould reconcile himſelf to man.

5. IN this, which might be called, and is called in ſcripture, a ſecond creation, the SON was likewiſe the agent. By an act of his omnipotence, he became what man is, at his firſt conception in the womb. *How* he did this, I know not, any more than *how* he created the world, or *how* I myſelf was originally formed, or *how* I exiſt at this preſent moment ; but as I muſt believe that *all* things are poſſible to God, I muſt likewiſe believe that he *could* do this, and, as it was moſt evidently neceſſary for the life of man, that he ſhould do ſo, I believe that he actually did ſo. From what is ſaid of the nature of the SON, and his dependence upon the FATHER for his life, it is evident that he only was fit, or could be fit for man's redemption. It was impoſſible that the ſpirit of life itſelf could ſuffer death ; but it was poſſible that he who had eternally *given* this ſpirit to another, could withdraw it. Thus, the Scripture tells, the SON of GOD died.

6. BY the death of this divine perſon, the union betwixt God and man became complete; and, in conſequence of his reſurrection, the human race became partakers of a divine principle; and thus *all* of them without exception are raiſed from the dead, and continued in exiſtence to eternity.

7. BY the operation of this divine principle, during the time we live on Earth, our former deſires and affections are gradually overcome and laid aſide, while others are introduced in their ſtead. Thus the perſon conforms himſelf to the law of God more or leſs, in proportion to the operation of the new principle or the old ones. There is likewiſe a poſſibility of giving ourſelves up *entirely* to the direction of our evil deſires and paſſions, ſo that the divine principle conferred upon us, becomes totally obſcured and loſt; or if attention is at any time paid to it, the perſon is torment- ed inſtead of being made happy.

8. At the resurrection, those in whom the principle of life had its full effect, feel themselves involved in it both soul and body. Their spirits are changed into a perfect conformity with the spirit of God; and bodies also are given them, formed of the **very divine essence** itself. They are beatified with the whole fulness of the Godhead itself. They are invested with the attributes of God. Every thought is suggested by infinite wisdom, and every action executed by infinite power. As the powers of God are subject to the FATHER, and to the SON, so are they likewise to the REDEEMED among mankind; and, as the Creator himself is adorned with his own perfections and beauties, so are they adorned with the same. This is the Scripture account of the reward of the just in a future state; let Mr. Paine try if he can find out any thing like it by studying the stars!

9. FROM those who have, in this world, extinguished or hid from their minds, the divine principle of life, it totally withdraws itself. They are thus left to see God by the natural faculties of perception which we have at present, and the consequence is what I have formerly said. They feel themselves in a lake of unquenchable fire, from whence they can no more be delivered; but whether this is attended with an *eternal* sense of pain, or whether the weaker faculties are destroyed, so that they remain in a perpetual and dreadful kind of sleep (which indeed I wish to believe) he that made the world only knows.

I MUST now finish with making some apology for publishing a doctrine so novel, and so very different from any thing I ever read or heard; from those who have undertaken to defend christianity. I have formerly been subjected to the charge of *blasphemy*, for what I now advance in this treatise. But I do not blaspheme. I took these doctrines from the Bible itself. If the reward given to man, appears to be *too great*, I answer, that less than an infinite gift is unworthy of an infinite giver, and therefore, the Deity himself must be the reward; for he only is infinite. Considering this, it may well indeed be said, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive" the gifts that God hath given. The thought is too great to be born, and overwhelms the mind in such a manner, that every science, every invention, pleasure, or enjoyment, shrinks into nothing before it; and the pursuits of mankind appear so vain, so ridiculous, and contemptible, that I am ashamed to think I should ever have the least inclination to any one of them. As Mr. Paine has begun his treatise with an account of his creed, I shall conclude with mine; which is, that I am not more convinced of my own existence, than that the Scripture is the **WORD OF GOD**, that by it *alone* we can know that there is a Deity, that Jesus Christ is the **SON OF GOD**, the **SAVIOUR** of mankind; *essentially* a **DIVINE PERSON**; and the Supreme Judge and Lord of Heaven and Earth.

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